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ABSTRACT

Papers presented on the Dip. H.E., a two-year course in higher education recently developed in Britain include: the future of higher education (W. Taylor); the colleges of education perspective on the Dip. H.E. (N. Payne); the colleges of further education perspective (W. Bosley); the polytechnics perspective (A. Sandbach); validating the diploma (M.R. Lane); the Dip. H.E. and the future (N.T. Hardyman); introduction to project A, considering the nature of the diploma and drawing up some basic principles for all related courses (C.M. Turner); introduction to project B, considering the implications of the Dip. H.E. for internal management and external relations of the institution (C.M. Turner); introduction to project C, on student recruitment and the marketing of graduates (T.J. Russell); and coherence in the degree program (W. Taylor). (MSE)

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Coombe Lodge Report

Vol 7 No 11

Study Conference 74/43

The Dip. H.E.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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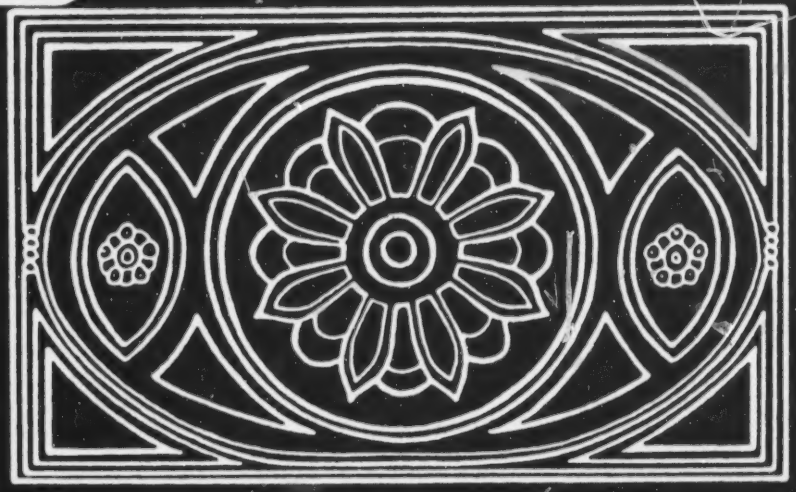

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Study Conference 74/43

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FOREWORD

The creation of the Dip.HE, a two year course in higher education was first proposed in 1972 in the James Report which envisaged it primarily as a means of enabling the colleges of education to diversify. Later that year the Government White Paper, "Education : a Framework for Expansion", which dealt with the future of the whole spectrum of post-school education, gave strong support to the concept of the Diploma, seeing it as an important mechanism towards the provision, in different types of institution, of

> "a wide and flexible choice of course, with a system of units and credits devised in such a way as to ease transfer from one course or institution to another, helping students to retrieve false starts and make more possible the development of recurrent education".

Progress was swift and by September 1974 two institutions, the North East London Polytechnic and Berkshire College of Education, had already begun to offer Dip. HE courses.

But many questions still remain concerning the nature of the course, its validation, its market, the changes it will create in external college relationships and internal college management. This conference held at the end of October, 1974, brought together representatives from polytechnics, colleges of FE and colleges of education. Speakers were drawn from the DES, CNAA, the university sector and all three types of college. Members had the opportunity to discuss the Dip.HE with 'A' level students and their teachers, and, in project work, to debate the main problems arising from its introduction. Short discussion papers on the Diploma proposals at members' own colleges were provided by participants and a day was devoted to a workshop on these papers.

Professor W Taylor,
Director, University of London Institute of Education.

THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

"In this paper I intend to challenge the concept of the Dip.HE, ask some questions about it and direct our thinking in one major direction - whether there is any truth in the suggestion that the Diploma was conceived in circumstances which no longer exist, and is therefore inappropriate to the conditions of today and the coming decade. In discussing the Dip.HE this must be considered for situations obviously do change. Was the Dip.HE devised at a time when higher education was set on a path somewhat different from the one which faces us now?

The first part of my paper will be an attempt to place the type of course of which the Dip.HE is an example in the context of recent and likely future developments in higher education. Secondly I shall consider some of the motives for introducing courses of this kind and discuss some of the problems associated with their introduction. Finally, I shall elaborate my thesis that the Dip.HE makes sense only if it is seen as an integral element in a policy of recurrent education, the main features of which I shall describe.

context

First, then, let me place the type of course of which the Dip.HE is an example in the context of recent and likely future developments in higher education. I stress 'the type of course of which the Dip.HE is an example' because the UK has not been alone in designing a two year short cycle course. For a variety of reasons there has been a massive expansion in post secondary education in developed countries during the past ten years, and the numbers coming forward for such education are likely to go on increasing, if not at quite such a rapid rate, for the next decade. The reasons are complex, but the phenomenon creates serious problems for democratic governments. For example, in France, the surge in demand for higher education was a contributory factor to the disturbances of May 1968, and eventually selection had to be introducted into the system for entry to higher education. The French situation was one which many people in this country wished quite passionately to avoid and some of the recommendations of the James Committee may be viewed in this context.

Most developed countries outside eastern Europe have espoused a policy of private or social demand concerning the provision of places in higher education. The Norwegian equivalent of the Robbins Committee stated this position very well in contending that

> "..... all who seek post secondary education should be able to find a fully acceptable opportunity at the academic level for which they are qualified."

This begs a lot of questions but its implications are clear. The number of places in post secondary education are not to be limited by the alleged 'demands' of society for particular kinds of highly qualified manpower or by any general economic advantage that the provision of such education might be shown to confer, but by the number of people who wish to take advantage of what is offered. This has been the philosophy in the UK since the Robbins Report. Although in specific areas we have adopted a manpower planning approach, medicine and teaching for example, provision on private or social demand has been dominant.

Any government committed to provision on private demand faces high costs. The current cost per student in universities or colleges of education is about ten times the cost per pupil in primary schools and five or six times that for secondary pupils. But there are also costs in not satisfying private demand - political costs, of a kind that make it worthwhile for politicians who want to get elected or to stay in office to do what they can to meet or to manipulate, but not to deny, the demand for places.

It is often suggested that we are moving from a system of elite higher education to one of mass post secondary education. It may be a comforting vision for some, and a frightening spectre for others. Such figures as we have in this country hardly suggest that the term 'mass' can realistically be applied to the scale of development that we were contemplating even before the present crisis. Only just over one in ten men and women aged 19 to 20 are currently following full-time courses at universities, colleges of education and in advanced further education. None of the projections or forecasts which I have seen suggest the kind of provision that would enable this proportion to more than double by the 1980s. Even if we add in the large numbers of sub-degree courses and part-time courses and part-time students and take into account the Open University and other kinds of what the Europeans call permanent education, I am still somewhat sceptical about the applicability of the term 'mass higher education'.

But leaving such fine points aside, the fact remains that the costs of providing higher education to satisfy private demand even of the scale at present contemplated, are extremely high. They press upon the total of public expenditure at a time when a relatively slow rate of growth and (what may be more important in the long run) something of a disenchantment with the benefits of such growth create a situation in which large scale increases in public expenditure are more and more difficult to sustain.

These facts, which are generally well known to us, provided a context in which Lord James and his colleagues made their recommendations. There is nothing particularly new about the short cycle course and the short cycle institution but those countries where such courses and institutions exist have had to steer a

careful path between a number of dangers to which the existence of the short cycle course give rise and which expose it to damaging criticism.

Broadly speaking, countries have tried to meet the demand for post secondary education by expansion outside the university sector in one of two ways. They have either established a system of what can be called first tier colleges, which furnish shorter courses that are terminal for a number of students, but which for a substantial proportion lead on to further studies, or they have set up what one commentator has called the 'alternative university', which provides courses of equivalent length and standard to those which were hitherto available only in the universities themselves. The United States has followed the first path, the first tier college, and such a pattern is also establishing itself in some of the provinces in Canada. In this country we have settled for the alternative university in the shape of the polytechnics and the creation of the degree granting CNAA.

Short cycle courses have a place within either of these two lines. One of the first to be introduced was in the French Institut Université Technologie (IUT), and if the new-style James-built colleges of education had been developed, these too would have been offering short cycle courses.

motives

The motives that underlie short cycle provision are various. In continental Europe, the wastage rates from traditional university type courses in open faculties have been very high, and it is clear that for many students the courses that they have failed to complete are not those for which they were best suited in the first place. The average length of time needed to complete such university courses is also considerably greater than the minimum period. For example, an analysis of the progress of 1,000 students in the medicine and law faculties of the French universities showed that only 402 obtained their degrees at all and of these only one third graduated within the minimum period of four years. The average length of study undertaken by a graduate was 5.3 years and to produce these 402 graduates the educational system had to provide 2,999 'years' of study - 7.5 years for each graduate.

Some students also find a life of study uncongenial by the end of two years experience of it but may later wish to return in order to continue their studies which in some cases is difficult under existing arrangements. For others, it is felt that two years is all that is needed to complete the general or vocational preparation that they need before entering employment at about the age of 20. Short cycle courses can also be of value in helping to sort out those who are most likely to benefit from continued post secondary education at a more advanced level, and may also help students themselves to identify the subject areas, disciplines and professions in which they have the greatest interest and in which they are most likely to succeed.

Furthermore, short cycle courses are cheaper, and there is no doubt that one of the factors that led many governments to show a considerable interest in alternative structures of post secondary education was the forbidding expense, towards the end of the 1960s, of continuing to expand provision along conventional lines. This clearly played a part in the creation of our own binary

system. In the last year for which figures are generally available it appears that among 16 European countries only Sweden devoted more than 20% of the total public expenditure to education; a further six countries spent between 15% and 20%; seven between 10% and 15% and two spent less than 10%. On the basis of extrapolations of present trends to 1980, it has been suggested that of these 16 countries, eight or nine would by then be devoting more than 20% of public expenditure to education, with some even exceeding 30%. In the words of one commentator this "seems hardly realistic in the light of present day international experience". High rates of economic growth and a relative decline in defence expenditure have contributed to the relative ease with which governments have found the money over the past 15 years for continuing growth in post secondary education. But there are many voices, and a number of significant social trends, which challenge the possibility and desirability of maintaining high growth rates and it now seems doubtful if, unless something dramatic happens on the international scene, we shall be able to divert much additional finance from defence or other areas. (In fact, in this country the current trend in educational policy is to divert funds away from tertiary education into other levels of provision.) This being so, the additional money must either be found from additional taxation, which does little to win elections, by greater reliance on private sources of finance, which tends to cancel out the 'equality of opportunity' objective that many governments espouse, or by spending less on hospitals and other forms of social expenditure.

criticisms

Thus there are many, often conflicting, motives which have encouraged consideration of the short cycle course. However, such courses have been criticised on many counts. Let me limit myself to two rather contrasting objections to these courses.

(a) In part of the world where short cycle courses have already been developed to a greater extent than in Europe, anxiety is being expressed about the way in which they all too readily model themselves on prestigious four year university institutions, and fail to achieve their original objectives. A recent report sponsored by the US Office of Education makes this point with particular reference to the American junior or community colleges.

> "'The Junior College scenario' is thus one of the transformations of community institutions into amorphous, bland, increasingly large, increasingly state dominated, two-year institutions which serve a number of interests other than that of their own students. No longer are they small in size. Community colleges now have an average involvement of 2,500 students. Almost 5% have enrolments of over 10,000. Most are growing rapidly and, were it not for the high drop out rate, enrolment pressures would be far more severe.
>
> Academic leaders in four year colleges and universities see them as buffers that will allow their institutions to preserve their 'academic integrity' and concentrate upon what they like best. High School officials see them as institutions which can relieve High Schools of the burden of preparing students for meaningful

careers. The public sees them as fulfilling a major social commitment to educational opportunity for all - without realising that the majority of college students never complete their course of study."

The domination of the university model for short cycle courses is a problem which we face with regard to the Dip.HE because one of the problems to which the joint CNAA/UGC Working Party gave its attention was that of interlock - the extent to which the content and organisation of the Dip.HE course could be linked with succeeding courses for degrees and other professional qualifications. It seems to me that the question of interlock is crucial to the success of the Dip.HE because students will not enrol if they think they will be end-stopped, crucial also because if the course is to lead on to other studies, it is likely that the course organisation and content will be strongly influenced by the eventual destinations. The avoidance of these twin dangers is a central problem.

(b) On the other side of the coin, there is some evidence that whatever the disadvantages may be of linking two year programmes in institutions with more demanding courses in somewhat more prestigious institutions, the drawbacks of not providing any such connection are considerable. In France the IUTs were based, in common with the Norwood Report and, I suspect, the James Report, on the notion that there are different types of individual who need different types of course. Only a small minority of students were deemed likely to be capable of continuing directly to the more theoretical studies of a university, and the selection procedures for such transfer are extremely strict. The normal intention is that holders of IUT diplomas should continue their studies on a part time or recurrent basis while in employment. There is clear evidence that in their early years expectations for the growth of IUTs were considerably in excess of actual demand. It seems clear that the ability of short cycle structures to cope with the pressure of demand for post secondary education depends to a certain extent on the links that they have with other institutions. Where the demarcation line is strict, transfers are few, and both academic and institutional links are tenuous, students of high quality are unlikely to be attracted to short cycle courses.

A further factor has developed since the Dip.HE was first suggested - the shortfall in the number of students with two 'A' levels seeking places in existing three or four year institutions. It is now possible to secure a place on a degree course with 'A' levels at a grade which gave no hope of doing so five years ago. This change must influence the position concerning the Dip.HE, unless it is possible to devise a Dip.HE course which is so imaginative, so attractive and so obviously relevant to the performance of a real and well-rewarded task in society that the young will flock to enrol for it rather than applying for three or four year degree courses.

recurrent education

Having said something about the context, motives and criticisms of the Dip.HE I shall now take a more optimistic line of thought and try to develop a thesis. It is a simple one - that the Dip.HE makes sense only in the context of a fairly well developed and well institutionalised pattern of recurrent education.

The term 'recurrent education' has been cheapened by repetition and by being used loosely in a variety of settings. Although there are always several claimants to the introduction of such a term, I had not seen it used until Olaf Palme, the Swedish Prime Minister, spoke at the sixth Conference of European Ministers at Versailles in May 1969. At first his speech seemed little different from what apologists for technological change had been saying for a long time - namely that the application of science and technology and consequent changes in the structure of the work force and so on demanded retraining and re-education. But we now recognise that there was more than this to what he said. Recurrent education has since been distinguished from apparently similar terms such as 'education permanent', life-long education, in-service education, adult education, life-long entitlement, post-work education etc. by the attention it pays to the distribution of education over the life span of the individual, i.e. the degree to which education alternates with other activities, principally with work but also with leisure and retirement. This distribution of education is the most important aspect of the concept of recurrent education and it is offered as an alternative to the straight line growth characteristic of developments in higher education in many countries over the past ten years. Some people have fears of the threat that recurrent education poses for existing institutions and regard the concept as politically unrealistic. But there is a good deal in it beyond the rhetoric which has accompanied many attempts, particularly by international organisations, to promote the notion of recurrent education. Beyond the rhetoric, beyond the attempt to offer an apparently cheaper way of satisfying demand that is seemingly both radical and likely to appeal to conservatively minded administrators, I think the notion does attempt to grapple with some real and urgent problems.

What are the prime characteristics of a policy of recurrent education? What are the principles upon which it is based? Perhaps I may list these briefly, as resource material for subsequent discussion:

(a) Upper secondary schooling should be of a kind that gives the individual pupil a choice between immediate entry to the labour force, entry to another educational institution as a full time student or deferred post-compulsory education. This idea is not fanciful. Large numbers of undergraduates already defer their post secondary education for a year or two. In Sweden this year, for the first time, under 50% of the university intake came directly from the gymnasium line (grammar school equivalent). In the UK we do not, of course, approach this figure, but our proportion is higher than in some other European countries.

Cumulative evidence from a substantial number of studies suggests that the important choices on the part of an individual about his post secondary education are taken early in his career. Although it may be possible to speed up or slow down progress by individual effort, the education escalator to which he is allocated by birth, early childhood experience and the progress made in the first stages of formal education inevitably provide much of the momentum for his future and in many cases determine his ultimate destination. Moreover,

our system of specialisation in which children can drop certain subjects at only 13 has an effect on ultimate decisions in a way which many other European countries view with horror. It is clear that something must be done to understand earlier stages of the educational career if the principle that upper secondary education should give the pupil a choice between immediate employment, entry to full time tertiary education and deferred post compulsory education is to be upheld.

(b) The second principle is that access to post compulsory education should be guaranteed at any time after leaving compulsory schooling. This type of access is growing in this country, but not as rapidly as in the US where the opportunity has existed for a long while.

The guarantee of post secondary education begs a lot of questions. If it is to mean anything it requires the existence of adequate systems of grants and student support to enable mature individuals to contract back into the system. There are few countries in which this opportunity exists. One reason why the Dip.HE was given a two 'A' level entry requirement was so that it would enable students to receive mandatory grants. In some countries paid educational leave has been introduced for certain grades of workers and in the UK we have the proposal in the James Report that teachers should be entitled to the equivalent of a term's paid study leave every five or seven years. Thus the notion of guaranteed access to post secondary education is spreading but the costs are high and this is not a good time for broaching the question of increased expenditure.

(c) Facilities for education need to be distributed in a way that will make them available to all individuals whenever and wherever needed. This may have a strong element of rhetoric but it is not irrelevant, for example, to the efforts which I think we can see reflected in current policy to spread education at post secondary level throughout the country, placing great stress on local and regional centres drawing students from their locality and trying to reduce the expenditure we are involved in by tradition in England and Wales of providing residential accommodation for students. The question of availability involves more than simply regional provision. It is also concerned with catering for some of the less cultural and climatically hospitable areas where opportunites are markedly less good than in, say, large cities.

(d) Work and other social experience should be regarded as a basic element in admissions rules and curricula design. This so far has only achieved full development in some American institutions. But there are problems. Should every kind of work carry credit? What aspects of personal, mental and cognitive development should an industrial placement period be expected to develop? The concept of work experience is easier to talk about in theory than to put into practice, and this was a central problem discussed by the Joint Working Party on the Dip.HE. The degree of interlock determines how much credit can be given for previous experience but many institutions are very conservative in their credit policy. Some universities still require students to start a course almost from the beginning even if they have

completed a substantial part of a degree elsewhere and even when the subject is apparently the same. The general feeling in many universities seems to be that the Dip.HE will get a year's credit unless the course has been designed from the beginning as an integral part of a potentially longer degree programme. This carries the risk that the final year determines the content and organisation of the first two in a way that may be educationally undesirable. It may make the Dip.HE indistinguishable from the first two years of any degree course and this may mean that the original objectives of the shorter course are not being met.

(e) It should be possible to pursue a career in a way that permits a regular alternation between periods of study and work. This principle has wide implications. It is unclear who is going to make it possible and important to pursue a career in this way. One can understand employers giving employees time off to update their skills and knowledge or to train for alternative types of work in the same concerns but not all careers benefit from arrangements of this kind. Moreover, the implication often seems to be that the alternation should be one with periods of full time study. The grant situation also causes problems. To provide adequately for 35 year olds is extremely difficult. The course they follow has to be local because they have dependants whom they do not wish to leave, the cost benefit calculations rarely come out to the benefit of the firm or society though they may be of benefit to the individual. It is difficult for society to recover its costs from the remainder of the working life of someone who has followed a full time programme of education at 35 if strict cost benefit criteria are adopted as distinct from social and personal criteria. Therefore implementation of this principle is difficult.

(f) The organisation and content of recurrent education should be designed in co-operation with various interest groups including employers, students and the customers of students in the shape of government agencies, local authorities industrial concerns as well as the academic institutions which provide the necessary courses. Here I think we have moved further than some countries, though this is more true in the technological fields and the polytechnics in particular than in the arts and the universities generally.

(g) The penultimate principle speaks out against the dangers of credentialism and argues that degrees and certificates have to be regarded as merely steps and guides within a process of lifelong educational and personal development. As a general aspiration this is difficult to fault, but it is the implications of such a continuous process which are important. Does it mean that every individual should have some kind of educational record which accompanies him throughout life?

(h) Finally, it is stated that each individual should be given legal right to periods of educational leave of absence without risking the loss of employment or social security status. This right has been written into the legislation of some countries. But does it also imply an obligation to take study leave? James hints at this, although it is not written into any contract of service.

I would argue that if these seven principles could be implemented, if we could develop a genuine system of recurrent education (and we have the signs of it - important elements of these principles are already met or are in the process of being met in this country), it may well be that the Dip.HE has a place. But my thesis is that unless some of these desiderata are met then we are unfortunately stuck with a course that was invented to meet a particular set of circumstances which no longer exist and are not likely to exist in the easily foreseeable future."

Discussion Arising

teaching qualification

Was there any possibility of the Dip.HE being used as a teaching qualification? Professor Taylor rejected this idea, saying that teachers should have at least a three or four year degree if the teaching profession was to draw its recruits from the same cohorts as other professions.

interlock

The dilemma of how much credit should be given for possession of a Dip.HE by a student entering a degree course was raised. Was it fair that a student might suffer loss of time? Professor Taylor thought it likely that most Boards in the University of London would only give one year's credit to a student wishing to proceed to a degree course. A member protested that this would undervalue the Diploma. A new type of degree was needed, tailored to have perfect interlock with the Dip.HE so that full credit of two years could be given. Professor Taylor sympathised but pointed out the problems involved. How long, for example, could a Dip.HE holder delay entry to further study and still expect to get full credit?

general and specialist courses

Debate then followed regarding the development of more general degree courses and the decline of specialist degrees. Some members thought first degrees might become more general, with recurrent education being specialised, although Professor Taylor believed that many institutions would object to this, fearing a decline in standards. A member suggested that secondary school education would become less specialised over the next decade and this would have the effect of making the non-specialised Dip.HE course a central feature of tertiary education instead of something rather on the periphery. Another participant observed that the CNAA, in its five year re-approval of courses, seemed to be moving away from an emphasis on specialist degree courses.

coherence

A theme which recurred throughout the week was introduced when a member asked Professor Taylor whether the Dip.HE units at the Institute of Education would have to have some coherence for the individual student, or whether students would have a free choice of the units they followed? Professor Taylor reminded the conference of how difficult it was to define coherence. It need not be cognitive coherence but could, for example, be vocational coherence. He thought that in his Institute the definition of coherence would emerge

through argument over concrete cases rather than being determined in advance.*

specialist Dip.HE

A member commented that although the White Paper had stated that the Dip.HE should be non-specialised, many colleges were proposing narrow courses. Professor Taylor answered that both types were needed if the Diploma was to become part of the larger educational structure. Many fields of study would not give two year credit for a non-specific two year course for a student wanting to go on to a degree.

recurrent education

The discussion ended with comments on recurrent education. Could Professor Taylor envisage a modular Dip.HE taken over several years in the same way as an Open University degree? He thought not, as there was a danger that this would result in a 'cafeteria' collection of credits. While there might be some Diploma courses of this type he would not like to see it become a dominant feature of the Dip.HE.

Would a student who embarked on a further course some time, say five years, after getting his Diploma have his credit reduced? Professor Taylor said this would depend on whether his post-Diploma experience had been related to the course. If not, his knowledge was likely to be out of date and therefore credit would have to be reduced if standards were to be kept up.

Professor Taylor added that recurrent education, as he envisaged it, would not replace normal post-school degree and other courses, for it would be so much more expensive to support mature students who were likely to have dependents. It should normally be for additional tertiary education which a student would not have decided to take immediately after school and for post-degree work.

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*A discussion paper which Professor Taylor wrote on the subject of coherence forms an appendix to this report.

THREE PERSPECTIVES ON THE DIP.HE

Three speakers, each from a different type of institution, gave their views on the Dip.HE.

N Payne, Principal, Newton Park College of Education, Bath.

THE COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

"To put the Dip.HE in its historical context, I shall begin with a brief review of its development:

The concept of a two year course of higher education is not new. Such courses have existed for many years and many still flourish today. The Dip.HE course, however, has certain characteristics which have not appeared in other courses. The possibility of such a course crystalised, as far as this country is concerned, with the James Committee, its Report and the discussion which followed, but internationally there has for some time been a great deal of interest in the concept of a short cycle course of higher education.

The James Committee was concerned primarily with the question of the education and training of teachers. In the James Report the Dip.HE was proposed as a means of tackling the problem of the isolation of teacher education from the rest of higher education, as it was carried out in colleges of education. This isolation was thought to be detrimental to the health of the teaching profession in general. Therefore diversification was advocated for colleges of education, it was suggested that some other work should be carried out by the colleges alongside the education of teachers. The Dip.HE was seen at that stage as a means of providing some degree of diversification for the colleges of education.

A second characteristic of the Dip.HE as envisaged by the James Committee was that it should be an attractive course for continuing education - a concept gaining increasing favour.

If the Dip.HE was to be introduced into a college it would have to relate to existing courses, so a third feature of the James Report's proposed scheme was that the conventional three year teacher's certificate course in which students are simultaneously educated and professionally trained be replaced by a two year programme of general education (the Dip.HE), followed by a year's concentrated professional training and a further year of induction in the schools. At the end of this four year period the James Report suggested that students be awarded a BA (Education) degree.

reaction

After publication of the James Report, the teaching profession on the whole rejected the proposals. Certainly the concept of the 2 + 1 + 1 course structure received little support. The main criticism was that the institutions which educated and trained the students in the first three years would have no control over the final induction year. The validating bodies were opposed to the idea of awarding a degree in such circumstances. The teaching profession as a whole rejected even the 2 + 1 section of the course structure, for it was thought that education and professional training could not be satisfactorily separated. There was, despite this, a fair amount of support for the concept of a Dip.HE in its own right.

White Paper

After a great deal of discussion the government produced a White Paper on the Dip.HE which went beyond the education and training of teachers, the context of the James Report, and applied to the whole spectrum of higher education for the ensuing decade. It expressed, as government policy, an acceptance of the Dip.HE as a new award to be introduced. The White Paper set out six conditions which the Diploma would have to satisfy:

(a) Standard - it was made clear that the standard of the Dip.HE should be equivalent to that of the first two years of a degree course. This distinguished the Dip.HE from any other existing two year courses and carried implications for entry qualifications.

(b) Availability - the government was anxious that the Dip.HE should not, as the James Report had implied, be confined to colleges of education but be offered in preferably all institutions of higher education: universities, polytechnics, other FE colleges and colleges of education.

(c) Acceptability - the government hoped that the new award would be acceptable to employing agencies and have currency as a qualification for employment.

(d) Credit - the White Paper required that a student who had achieved a Dip.HE after two years study should get two years' credit for the work he had done to count towards further courses.

(e) Validation - the government hoped that existing validating bodies, the CNAA and the universities, would validate the new award.

(f) Maintenance grants - the White Paper stated that it was the government's intention that students taking the Dip.HE should receive mandatory maintenance grants.

transbinary working party

The CNAA responded quickly to the White Paper by expressing its willingness to consider validating the new awards. Being unable to speak with one voice, the universities were slower to respond, but fairly quickly the UGC and the CNAA set up a transbinary working party, the first time the universities and the CNAA had ever acted jointly. This group established guidelines which would be of use both to the validating bodies and the institutions which were considering

mounting Dip.HE courses. It is important to remember that the transbinary group represented only the validating bodies, it did not include representatives of all the numerous groups interested in the Dip.HE.

After considering the White Paper the transbinary group felt that they could not disagree with its six criteria for the Dip.HE and produced guide lines on the Dip.HE. These guide lines had four essential features:

(a) Standard - For two main reasons the two 'A' level normal entry requirement for a degree course should apply to the Dip.HE. This is probably the most controversial aspect of the Diploma, and there is a body of opinion which feels it is quite wrong to impose this constraint on the new course. The group felt that it must insist on this entry requirement because if the course is to gain currency it must be seen to be equivalent in standard to that of the first two years of a degree course. Secondly, the group was anxious that there should be no discretionary element in the grant to students following the course. The DES advised us that unless entry requirements were rigorous there would be little chance of the Diploma qualifying for mandatory grants. The DES is naturally wary of opening the floodgate to a plethora of demands for mandatory grants for other two year higher education courses and sees the two 'A' level requirement as a useful distinguishing feature in this respect. However, due to NUS pressure the situation seems recently to have become less clear cut and there will, in any case, be provision for exceptional cases as already exists in CNAA and university degree entry requirements.

(b) Credit - The Dip.HE should not be an end-stop qualification but for the student who makes the appropriate choice of Dip.HE course should be a step in a continuing path into future qualifications. The James' concept of a two year general course which did not lead on to further studies was rejected. This is not to say that it is ruled out for the student who particularly wants that type of Dip.HE course but the institution should devise its Dip.HE courses so that any student who wishes to do so and has selected the right options can bank his Dip.HE for future use.

(c) Modular structure - The group tentatively suggested that a modular structure for Dip.HE courses might have a certain advantage over conventional structures in terms of flexibility.

(d) Grading - The Dip.HE should be a pass/fail award without grades, honours or distinction. However, if it is to fit into a structure of continuing education it is important for the colleges offering the follow-on course to have a basis for deciding whether a student has the necessary background to be given credit to count towards his follow-on course. Therefore the method used by the Open University was adopted and the transbinary group recommended that each diplomate should receive a transcript showing the grades received in each component of the course, although the Diploma itself would not show any grade.

universities

A few universities have shown a hesitant acceptance of the Dip.HE from the point of view of validation but many others have not responded. There is little indication at present, with perhaps one or two exceptions, of a university willing not only to validate a Dip.HE award but to actually contemplate offering a Dip.HE course itself. One or two universities have indicated that they might be willing to use the Dip.HE as an award for a student who leaves a degree course at the end of the first two years. The transbinary group is adamant that the Dip.HE must not be used as a means of getting rid of students on three year degree courses whom the institution does not wish to keep, nor must it be awarded to a student who has not satisfactorily completed his first two years.

CNAA

The CNAA accepted the Dip.HE as an award it would validate. It set up a validating group which is rather different from other groups in the CNAA as this award can cover the whole spectrum of academic work in an institution and is not confined to the sciences, education or the arts and social sciences, the groups into which other CNAA courses fall. The validating group for the Dip.HE therefore has representatives from all three of these areas.

The group has already met on several occasions and has received a number of Dip.HE course proposals. So far it has agreed to validate two, and the courses began in September 1974 at the North East London Polytechnic and Berks College of Education. The courses differ enormously in character.

NELP Dip.HE

The approach at NELP is very open. The polytechnic is sceptical about the need to have an entry requirement of two 'A' levels. Situated where it is, NELP has particular problems for in that part of London there is a low proportion of people entering higher education and there were good grounds for allowing the polytechnic to go ahead with a flexible open-ended Diploma and seeing what happened. There is an emphasis not on courses with a detailed syllabus worked out in advance but in student-directed studies. Students have an initial 'settling-in' period in college and during this time they decide what kind of Dip.HE course they would like to do and an attempt is made to design the course to suit their individual requirements.

Berks College of Education Dip.HE

The course at Berks College of Education, very different in concept, illustrates something of the problems of the colleges of education. In Berks a CNAA B.Ed. course had already been approved. It had a modular structure and was basically of the 2 + 1 pattern recommended by the James Report. A student can opt himself to do a number of major focuses. The Dip.HE is formed by selecting focuses from the B.Ed. course. Owing to the pattern of the course, the B.Ed. units easily lend themselves to being used as a Dip.HE course and the degree was, in fact, designed to do this. One or two extra focuses are being designed for use exclusively by Dip.HE students.

coherence

The CNAA Dip.HE validating group have taken from the transbinary group's guidelines a principle which I have not yet specifically referred to but which is of vital importance - the need for the two year course to be coherent in

academic terms for each student. This can be a problem when trying to make use of a structure of units designed for another course. One or two proposals under consideration by the CNAA at present are causing concern for they make use of first and second year units originally designed only for a degree course. This can only be done if at the end of the first two years of the degree there is a natural stopping point.

colleges of education

Colleges of education are battling with problems of institutional reorganisation and B.Ed. structures and have had little opportunity so far to pay much attention to the Dip.HE, but no doubt they will in the future. A fundamental problem is that colleges of education are having to reduce their teacher training numbers. This means there will be vacant student places. Given the present economic climate, no government could envisage allowing unused plant and resources and therefore other uses have to be found for these empty places. Linking with this is a second factor - in developing other uses for colleges of education accommodation there is little hope of extra staff or material resources being made available.

The staffing resources in colleges of education is a limiting factor in the development of new types of course because their experience and expertise is limited in terms of breadth, in contrast to staffing resources in many colleges of FE. This is due to the fact that FE colleges tend to tackle their staffing requirements by [illegible] a core of permanent full time staff supported by part time staff appointed on a yearly basis. Colleges of education, in contrast, have a tradition of relying almost exclusively upon full time permanent staff and even where part time staff are employed it tends to be on a permanent basis. Therefore colleges of education cannot at short notice adjust their staff to phase out one activity and build up another. They will have problems in devising and mounting new courses within their existing staff and material resources unless a hard line is taken and large scale redundancy used, which would be most unfortunate. But it will require some ingenuity to devise new courses which do not call for large scale recruitment of new staff.

liberal arts

As a result many colleges are hoping to develop new courses in the field of liberal arts. It is not going to be very easy for the colleges to develop, with their existing resources, new courses in science and technology, management, etc, and therefore it is natural for them to think in terms of BA general degrees and Dip.HEs in liberal arts and so on. But whilst these would probably be excellent courses, they are not greatly needed in terms of national provision. Liberal arts courses are already well provided in universities and polytechnics.

interlock

With the question of resources comes the next in my list of problems faced by colleges of education. The number of students in colleges affects the number of options which they can be offered. For example, my own college is accustomed to running a three and four year course in teacher training for an annual intake of 180 students. With that number we have been able to offer a range of about 10 academic subject specialisms for the student to

choose from. This gives a viable student group of about 18 per subject. It seems that our future annual intake to the new three and four year B.Ed. degree in three to five years time may be reduced to 100 students. If the B.Ed. degree remains restricted to students intending to teach the options it will probably have to be reduced to five or six in order to maintain viability. Therefore we are keen to consider new courses to see if they can be interlocked with the B.Ed. course so that the numbers recruited for the new course can, in certain areas, join with the numbers on the B.Ed. course in order to bring numbers back to a viable level.

What areas of diversification can the colleges of education consider? The Dip.HE which leads forward without loss of time to a B.Ed. degree is an obvious possibility. As I mentioned earlier, there are difficulties regarding professional training as many B.Ed. degrees prefer to include some professional training in at least the second year, and in some cases in the first year. What then happens to the Dip.HE student who decides to join the B.Ed. course but has not taken any professional training units? A solution is that he may have to suffer loss of time. Many colleges are thinking in terms of a BA degree as another outlet point, though, as I said before, this might be difficult to justify in national terms. What other courses might a college of education consider running? Of course this is affected by the institutional future of the college as well as its academic future. Colleges are being reorganised - some will become merged, amalgamated with or absorbed into the local polytechnic. In such cases the Dip.HE can and must link with further opportunities in other polytechnic courses. Other colleges will be linked with non-polytechnic colleges of FE. Here again there is obvious potential for using the resources and experience of the FE institution to provide the necessary outlets for the Diploma student. Of course, these must be truly advanced courses, but need not necessarily be degree courses - there is a whole range of professional courses which might be suitable as follow-on courses for Dip.HE holders.

recruitment

Colleges of education face another problem which applies to any instituion considering offering Dip.HE students, the problem of recruitment. Are there in fact any students who want to do the Dip.HE course? The cynics suggest that there is no real demand for such a course, and there has been a depressing easing off in applications for higher education courses. If a student has to have two 'A' levels to take a Dip.HE, will he not opt for a degree course if there are places available? More optimistically, others feel that there is a category of students who are not willing to commit themselves to a three or even four year degree course and are attracted to a two year course provided they can be reasonably sure that these two years will count as credit towards a degree if they wish to go further.

employment

A second problem facing all institutions considering Dip.HE is that they want to be satisfied that the Diploma will have a currency in its own right among employers. At present students taking the HND, the nearest equivalent we have at present to a Dip.HE, have a clear idea of the employment prospects to which it will give access. We do not at this moment know what currency

the Dip.HE will have. Even the Civil Service has been reluctant to accept the Dip.HE as an entrance qualification. But perhaps this is a chicken and egg situation - until employers can see the output of the Dip.HE they may hesitate to commit themselves to welcoming it, and until the student can see some reasonable chance of employment he may be reluctant to consider taking the course. The results of the Dip.HEs at NELP and Berks College of Education may give some indication of the eventual enthusiasm from both employers and students for the course.

To return to the title of my talk, we have in colleges of education broadly accepted the Dip.HE as an award in which we would like to be involved, and in many cases are actually devising Dip.HE courses. We are doing this within certain constraints, which I have indicated, but hope that we will be able to offer Dip.HE courses shortly and work with our colleagues in the other educational instituions and the professions to make the Dip.HE something which fits into the existing structure of academic education."

Discussion Arising

SSRs

Referring to Mr. Payne's comments on the possibility of interlock between Dip.HE and degree courses in order to achieve viable group sizes, a member raised the issue of the calculation of student staff ratios for colleges of education. Mr. Payne explained that traditionally in colleges of education group size had been approached through the calculation of an overall student staff ratio for the college which gives a theoretic total staff and within that staff there is an allocation, internally, of group sizes in order to make the operation of the college viable. It was regarded as the colleges academic responsibility to allocate a group size within the overall student staff ratio and not something which should be imposed externally. In this way it was possible to balance small uneconomic groups with larger groups. It was necessary, however, that this operation was carried out within certain aspects of a total course. Difficulties would arise if an attempt was made to do it over a whole course. This was the problem with the B.Ed. course, for the total student number would be going down below the level at which the number of options which the college wanted to offer on the course remained viable within the total institutional viability. The B.Ed. was a degree which embraced a large number of disciplines and so colleges were unwilling to reduce the number of options available, but they would have to do so unless group numbers could be boosted by the options being shared by students on other courses.

amalgamation

Mr. Payne was asked to express his personal views on the amalgamation of colleges of education with the rest of FE. He said he welcomed it, for the isolation of the training of teachers had indeed been a great problem. It was of particular benefit for colleges amalgamating with polytechnics. He had some slight reservations regarding merger with colleges of FE which concentrated largely on 16-18 work, as this might deter older students, wishing to train as teachers, from applying to these institutions, but on the whole, he viewed amalgamation as beneficial.

entry requirements

In view of the fact that student applications for teacher training were falling, was it wise at the present time to move towards a two 'A' level entry requirement? Mr. Payne reminded members that government figures for students in training in 1981 were 60% of the present intake. Currently only 40% of the students had two 'A' levels, and so, if this percentage did not increase and two 'A' levels were insisted upon, there would be a shortfall in intake in terms even of the reduced numbers wanted in 1981, let alone the numbers wanted today. Therefore there could not be an immediate change to a two 'A' level requirement for teacher training. But there was a change to a two 'A' level (or equivalent) entry requirement for new-style B.Ed. degrees. Most colleges therefore would probably continue to offer the present teacher's certificate course for students who do not have two 'A' levels.

Mr. Payne added that it was his personal opinion that in recruitment one eventually gets what one asks for. At present students were interviewed before they took their 'A' levels and if colleges decided to offer them a place they usually did so unconditionally, for the students already had the minimum entry requirements, five 'O' levels. Therefore, in the latter part of the sixth form course the student was not under such pressure to pass 'A' levels. If the student had to get two 'A' levels in order to take the place offered, it was quite possible that students who now only got one 'A' level would manage to pass two.

'education permanent'

In view of the current interest in education for the whole community, not simply those young people who traditionally took further and higher education, would it not be a good idea for colleges of education with empty places to run courses for mature students: part time Dip.HEs, 'gateway courses' leading eventually to degree courses for people without two 'A' levels, and so on. Mr. Payne agreed that colleges of education should expand into these areas. At Newton Park College a teacher training course had for some years been offered to mature students. Entry requirements were looser than for ordinary students and they could take a shortened two year course.

Dr. W Bosley, Principal, Slough College of Technology.

THE COLLEGES OF FURTHER EDUCATION

"I was flattered, if somewhat overawed, when I was invited to take part in this conference, the more so when I saw the list of course members and realised that most, if not all, of them would undoubtedly know much more about the Dip.HE than I do. No doubt many have had, or are having, a sabbatical year in which to think deeply about the part which the Dip.HE will, in due course, play in the higher education scene.

I have managed to read some of the recent out-pourings about the new Diploma and I must say that some of the educational journals seem to have been mildly hysterical about it. For example, according to a leader in 'The Times Higher Education Supplement' "1972 was the year of the Dip.HE". Even if the impact of the Dip.HE were as earth-shattering as this would lead us to believe (and I am bound to admit that I believe its effect is somewhat less than this) I would still find it difficult to speak about it for the allocated period of 50 minutes. Therefore I propose to outline fairly briefly some aspects of the Dip.HE which seem of particular relevance to the sort of college in which I work and then invite discussion.

institutions offering Dip.HEs

Perhaps I should begin by saying something about the sort of college in which I work, and perhaps more important, about the type of students and the courses offered in a typical, fairly large college of technology.

Many members of this conference come from colleges of education, each set, no doubt, in hundreds of acres of rolling parkland and based on a stately home. People from such institutions may feel that the 'local tech' - standing there, next to the gas works, with the grime on its windows bearing one finger representations of members of staff together with precise statements regarding what they can do with their lecture notes - is a very different world from their own. They may think that most, if not all of our work, consists of trying to show illiterate apprentices how to knock nails into wood without amputating their thumbs, and such like tasks, but as my colleagues from colleges of technology would stress, this picture of our activities, though fairly widely held, does not entirely accord with reality. Let me hasten to say that no one who works in a college of technology should be ashamed of our origins, about 200 years ago, in the Mechanics Institutes. Nor should he belittle apprentices and the courses they attend in bricklaying, electrical installation, TV servicing and so on. Society has as much need for men with these skills as for physicists, historians and sociologists with first class honours degrees, and, incidentally, rewards some of them with higher salaries than the graduates!

People may wonder, however, whether the Dip.HE ought to be offered in colleges which engage in this lower level work rather than in the more cloistered atmospheres of universities and colleges of education. We should remind ourselves therefore that at the last count there were almost as many higher education students in the FE sector as in the universities and nearly twice as many as in the colleges of education. Moreover, about half the higher education students in the FE sector were in non-polytechnic colleges. It is true that many of these higher education students in the FE sector are part time, but does anyone seriously question the validity of this mode of study nowadays or maintain that these students are less important than those who study for a shorter, full time period? Let me also point out that in my own college there are about 250 students studying for what we must now remember to begin to call the 'CNAA Postgraduate Diploma in Management Studies' - I wonder how many university departments have this number of postgraduate students? This college also has more students in receipt of postgraduate bursaries from the SSRC than many universities.

Nevertheless, the concept of an academic 'pecking order' is well established with Oxford and Cambridge at the top, followed by the other universities, the polytechnics, the colleges of education, and, right at the end, the poor old 'tech'. The level of importance attached to this pecking order may be demonstrated by the fact that a professor of a provincial university complained that his external examiner's fee, from a college of technology was inadequate, remarking "I always get £350 except from Cambridge where I get £100, but then it is a privilege to be asked there". Of course the pecking order which I have described is an over-simplification - if only because there are still many college of education students on courses for which the minimum entrance qualification is five GCE 'O' levels and many technical college students on courses demanding a minimum of one or two GCE 'A' levels, let alone those doing postgraduate courses. I hope I have established that the larger colleges of technology have the necessary academic standards and atmosphere to enable them to offer Dip.HE courses. It may still be said, however, that there is a need for colleges running these Diploma courses to be able to offer a breadth of course, but the modern college of technology is able to do so. In addition to courses in engineering, science, business studies and so on, many offer courses in the arts, music, drama, and so on.

function of the Dip.HE

Having, I hope, established a place for the college of technology in the ranks of the providers of the Dip.HE, let us now consider how the Diploma might be developed in such colleges. Perhaps we should first ask ourselves what the Dip.HE is supposed to do. Presumably it is not supposed to syphon off students from existing degree courses because we know the birth rate is falling and in addition there seems to be a disinclination amongst some youngsters who might be expected to go to university to actually do so - at least for traditional types of courses. We therefore probably have enough places already for all the traditional type of university entrants likely to present themselves at our institutions seeking full time higher education.

Is the Dip.HE intended to attract a wider spectrum of students into higher education to counteract the two trends to which I have just referred? If so it seems peculiar that it should have the same entrance requirements as existing higher education courses demand. The 'Times Higher Education Supplement' of May 11th 1973 argued strongly that the Working Party which drew up the Dip.HE guide-lines was wrong in specifying two 'A' levels for entry to the Diploma and asked "Is the introduction of the Dip.HE supposed to lead to an extension of educational opportunity by bringing into higher education students at present excluded, or does it amount simply to a 'reshuffling of the pack' by extending the range of courses in higher education?" The same paper also pointed out on January 26th 1973 that with a one 'A' level minimum entry standard, as for the HND, the Diploma would represent a genuine extension of opportunity and introduce much greater educational flexibility. One must, I think, agree with this, but I feel that the Working Party itself can be excused from blame because its hands were tied. The White Paper states (page 32)

> "...the normal minimum entry qualifications should be the same as for degrees or comparable courses - five GCE passes including two at 'A' level."

It was made very clear to the Working Party at the outset that this was "not negotiable". I feel it is unfortunate that so much emphasis is given to the qualifications held by a student at the start of a course, when it is only the standard he reaches at the end which should really matter. Surely some lessons could have been learnt from the Open University which demonstrates that an acceptable standard can be reached without slavish adherence to a particular entrance qualification.

Is the Diploma then designed to enable students to delay having to make irreversible decisions about specialisation? Here we seem to be on firmer ground since, it seems, it certainly will have this effect, especially where a range of follow-on courses is available. At the present time a student with two good 'A' levels (and, even more, one with three) has a fairly wide choice of degree courses to which his 'A' levels will admit him. I do not know of any study which has been made of the factors which lead him to decide, on, say a history degree course rather than one in English, or a physics degree course rather than one in chemistry, but it would be an interesting field for research. What seems clear however is that having embarked on their degree courses many youngsters decide that they have made the wrong choice and if they could change courses they would do so. The evidence for this statement comes from work done at Keele University in 1968 where no less than 40% of the students changed their choice of main subject in their degree during, or at the end of, the foundation year. Keele is unique in providing this opportunity to switch subjects easily at the end of the first year. If students at other universities experience the same wish to change course, though they may find it difficult or impossible to do so, perhaps this is the first real justification for the Dip.HE.

constraints

The problems are, of course, formidable. The guide-lines state that:

(a) the Diploma must be an acceptable qualification in its own right;

(b) it should be possible for Diploma holders to transfer to other programmes of further study at the same institution or at another one without loss of time;

and the White Paper states that the relationship between the Dip.HE and the HND and the qualifications of TEC and BEC needs careful attention - presumably to enable students to transfer into the Dip.HE. How can anyone design a Dip.HE to conform with all these constraints? If, moreover, the Diploma is to be designed so as to enable the student to keep all his options for further study open, there must be the greatest possible number of courses of further study into which he can transfer and the difficulties of designing the programmes become very great indeed.

technical college contribution

What contribution can the colleges of technology make to this situation? I hope that I have demonstrated that, with their wide range of activities, their large numbers of highly qualified staff and often excellent buildings and equipment they are as well placed as most other institutions to devise the

very broad-based Dip.HE programmes referred to in the literature. The main disadvantage about such courses, it seems to me, is that they need enormous numbers of students to make them viable with their innumerable ranges of option combinations (the North East London Polytechnic's Dip.HE course is said to be designed for a student intake of 150 or more). Whether suitably qualified students will be coming forward in these numbers at more than a very few centres seems doubtful. If there are to be a few large centres it would seem that colleges of technology, being situated usually in the centre of towns with reasonable transport facilities, are more likely to be able to recruit the required numbers of students, on a day basis, than some of the more remote colleges of education which do not have, and are unlikely to get, sufficient extra hostel accommodation to enable them to offer the students residential facilities.

There is another part which the colleges of technology can play in the Dip.HE programme - giving sympathetic consideration to post-Dip.HE students from neighbouring colleges who wish to undertake further study at the technical college preferably without loss of time. Finally, colleges of technology can pool their resources with neighbouring colleges of education so that together they can offer the sort of range of options which in isolation neither would be able to offer.

At my own college we are hoping to do all three of these things, for example:

(a) We are planning to use our computer facilities to offer suitable options in the Berks College of Education Dip.HE;

(b) We are investigating what arrangements we can make for students from the Berks College of Education to transfer into our courses, preferably without loss of time, after acquiring their Dip.HE;

(c) We are putting up an application for our own Dip.HE which, while it will still be widely based, will not duplicate the course at Berks College of Education.

pre-professional courses

There is, however, a possibility of a rather different kind of Dip.HE which I believe could very suitably be offered by colleges of technology, one which would act as a foundation course or pre-professional course for a group of related specialisms. At the moment in colleges such as my own separate courses are offered, in, for example, insurance, Building Society operation, accountancy and so on. Whether a youngster really knows, when he enrols with us, that he wants to be a banker rather than an accountant or vice versa, I am not sure, but once he has begun the course it becomes difficult for him to change to another programme. I believe, though I do not have very deep specialist knowledge, that there is sufficient common ground in such groups of courses for a Dip.HE to be offered (mainly on a part time day basis) and to be followed by the appropriate specialist professional course corresponding to the student's chosen occupation. Certainly I believe that all the different brands of accountants: the ACA, the ICA, the ICMA, the AMTA etc. who

are now considering recruiting people with a degree and following this with professional courses could just as well have entrants to the profession starting with a Dip.HE instead of a degree. I was delighted to hear that such a move is now under consideration for some professions.

In the science field, similarly, it would be advantageous if professional bodies agreed on a suitable common course leading to a scientific Dip.HE which could be followed by courses leading to Grad. RIC, Grad. Inst. P, MI Biol. and so on. In this way we might also overcome the difficulties which many of us experience already and which are likely to get worse in future, resulting from inadequate enrolments in many science courses. Whether similar arrangements could be made in, for example, construction courses for architects, quantity surveyors, Institute of Building students etc. I do not know, but I believe that great benefits could be derived if such schemes were to be set up. Cost/benefit ratios could be improved, students might end up in jobs more nearly in line with their abilities and preferences and the security of tenure of college of technology academic staff might be enhanced. The final point to remember about such schemes is that to a large extent they would deal with the sort of students we already take into colleges of technology and so, to that extent, are less speculative than some of the other Dip.HE schemes which have been proposed.

I do not underestimate the difficulty of persuading the very independent professional bodies to co-operate with each other to the extent which would be necessary to bring such schemes into operation, but I doubt that it would be absolutely impossible - just difficult! The engineering institutions have, as in so many other fields, set an example of co-operation with the setting up of the CEI so let us not be too pessimistic about the prospects of other bodies following suit with the Dip.HE.

Before ending I should like to comment briefly on two other matters. The first concerns the relationship of the Dip.HE to the HND, for which colleges of technology already provide a considerable range of courses - in engineering, science, business studies, computing, construction and so on. These courses demand a minimum entry qualification of one 'A' level (or an ONC or OND) but, of course, as with Certificate of Education courses, many students enter with more than this minimum and it is possible that those with good ONDs or with two 'A' levels will choose to enter Dip.HE courses where these are available. At the same time the HND is about to suffer from the establishment by TEC and BEC of Higher Technician Diplomas and Certificates and it could be that the result of this two-pronged attack will be the demise of the HND. Many of the colleges of technology would regret this, because the HND has been of value and because the holder of a single 'A' level will have difficulty in finding a course of a reasonable standard for which his entry qualification is acceptable. Moreover, industrialists, whose job, we must remember, is primarily to produce goods and services and not to spend all their time keeping up with the frequent changes in the educational scene, will not welcome another upheaval. They know, and largely accept, the HND and they do not know and will take time to accept the Dip.HE and TEC and BEC qualifications.

Dip.HE leading to Masters degrees

The last point I shall mention is one which I raised at an early meeting of the Working Party on Guide Lines. Why should not a Dip.HE programme be devised for the most able type of student with excellent 'A' levels, which would be followed by a two year taught course leading directly to the award of a Master's degree without stopping on the way to take a Bachelor's degree. More and more students are opting to study taught Master's degrees and even more will do so in future. If students are prepared to study for four years in order to be awarded a Masters degree surely it would make more sense for this time span to be divided into two periods of two years rather than the present three years plus one year. Moreover, such an arrangement would certainly give the Dip.HE all the status it needed and would help to get it off the ground as an academically acceptable qualification. This idea seems to me to be worthy of discussion at least, though I have not seen any evidence that it has been considered. What, finally, is the future of the Dip.HE - does it, in fact, have a future? A somewhat depressing article in the Times Higher Education Supplement noted that pupils in Yorkshire schools had barely even heard of this Diploma. How typical is this of the country as a whole and how concerned should this make us about its future?"

Discussion Arising

publicity

The first point to be discussed was the one raised by Dr. Bosley at the end of his address. A conference member said that there was no reason to inform young people in schools about the Dip.HE before programmes for the Diploma had been decided and they could be told what was being offered. To some extent Dr. Bosley sympathised with this view, but he felt that the need for good recruitment figures meant that schools had to be informed fully about Diploma courses. Another member added that there was no need for the lack of knowledge in schools about Dip.HEs to cause concern. He drew an analogy with the setting up of the CNAA, saying that it was a considerable time before anyone not directly involved in it had even heard of it.

A participant then suggested that perhaps the wrong approach was being used in 'selling' the Dip.HE to possible students. The Dip.HE was part of a radical change in higher education, not simply a minor adjustment. The Open University had pioneered the use of modular degrees and accreditation and this was the basic characteristic of the Dip.HE. The Diploma was part of a flexible system which allowed for delayed choice of final options, and this, perhaps, was what publicity about the Diploma ought to emphasise.

modular schemes

The advantages of a modular system were endorsed by another member. The students on the experimental HND course in computer studies at his polytechnic took the same modules as degree course students but did half the number in two years as the degree students did in three. However, HND students had the opportunity to take additional modules so that at the end of their two year course they had reached the same point as the degree students

at the end of two years (or, potentially, Dip.HE students). Then by moving into the third year of the degree course the students could take a degree at the end of three years. This was one of the great advantages of the unit system and the fact that the Joint Committee had found such an experiment acceptable made the possibility of the Dip.HE being just part of a more flexible system of higher education than at present seem quite feasible.

Masters degrees

Taking up Dr. Bosley's idea that Dip.HEs might, for the most able students, lead directly to entry to a Master's degre course, a participant commented that this was an excellent suggestion. In the USA, after all, first degrees were often of about the same standard as Dip.HEs would be, and graduates from such courses proceeded to taught Masters' courses. Furthermore, some universities in this country accepted HNC students for taught masters degree courses. Oxford Polytechnic, for example, had successful students who went on to Oxford University to take postgraduate courses.

viability

On the question of viability of Dip.HE courses, a member remarked that if a college was to offer both full time and part time courses, the latter including evening work, the full time courses would have to be constructed around the part time day and evening courses in order for the student numbers to be sufficiently high.

continuation

The need for Dip.HE holders to have adequate opportunities for continuing on further courses within the same institution was stressed. A member related this to his own experience of recruitment for HND courses. Where such courses were offered in departments which did not run CNAA degrees which the students might go on to the HNDs had failed to attract students. Therefore the Dip.HE would have to have inbuilt transferability.

Dr. A Sandbach, Assistant Director, The Polytechnic, Wolverhampton.

THE POLYTECHNICS

"Clearly, there can be no single 'polytechnic perspective'. I can speak only from the standpoint of the Polytechnic, Wolverhampton, and even then, I do not always agree with my colleagues on such matters as Dip.HE course planning. The main aim of my paper is to give information about the development of Dip.HEs in polytechnics and to comment upon some of the problems of the new qualification.

present position

In the spring of 1974 eight institutions received DES approval to mount Dip.HE programmes for 1974. This figure became nine when Wolverhampton Polytechnic received a conditional approval for two intakes of students. Of

the nine institutions seven were polytechnics and two colleges of education. The plans at North East London Polytechnic and Wolverhampton Polytechnic were 'ab initio' schemes designed separately from the other courses in the institutions. The schemes in the polytechnics of Huddersfield, City of London, Bristol, Portsmouth and Sunderland were related to existing degree programmes. With the exception of NELP's scheme, all the plans for Dip.HE's in the polytechnics were for a modular course structure. In the event, only one of the polytechnics (NELP) and one of the colleges of education (Berkshire) had their schemes accepted by the CNAA.

From the very beginning, NELP was ahead of most other polytechnics in its planning. Apart from having the most interesting proposal in many ways the polytechnic was apparently the first to make a serious study of the Dip.HE. As early as October 1972 they had set up a group to consider the implications of a Dip.HE proposal and from then onwards they devoted considerable resources to the development of the course.

time scale

The time scale for the development of the course proposal at NELP, and our own proposal, set against national developments is shown below.

Time Scale for Developments of two Polytechnic Proposals

	NELP	TPW	National
1972			James Report
	WP est. (Spring)		
	WP reports (Oct)		White Paper - Edn.: A Framework for Expansion - Circular 7/73
1973		WP est (Jan)	
		WP reports (May)	Guidelines Published (May)
	Scheme to CNAA (Nov)		
1974			CNAA invites submission (Dec)
			DES approves 8 (9) Coll. for 1974 start (Feb/Mar)
	Scheme approved (May)	Scheme to CNAA (June)	6/74
		Scheme deferred	2 schemes approved/ 7 deferred or rejected.
	Programme starts		
1975			

It is interesting to observe that the two 'ab initio' schemes had a similar gestation period. A second point which a consideration of the development of the Dip.HE reveals is the very short time in which it has developed. The plans for TEC and BEC, and suggestions for reforming the GCE A level examination system seem to have been circulating for a great deal of time, and in comparison the period of less than three years between the publication of the James Report and the start of the first Dip.HE programme has been remarkably short. Perhaps some of the uncertainties associated with the Dip.HE are because so much has been attempted within such a short time. Finally, it should be noted that the publication of Circular 7/73 took place in the middle of the development of many Dip.HE schemes and had a considerable impact.

At Wolverhampton, for example, we are considering amalgamation with three colleges of education. This naturally affects the type of continuation courses we will offer and has been an important feature in the planning of our proposal.

recruitment

Having described briefly the present state of developments of Dip.HE courses and Polytechnics, with special reference, I should now like to turn my attention to the problems which are likely to confront an institution trying to offer a Dip.HE. The first is whether it will attract any students, or, to put it another way, what is the 'gap' it is trying to fill? The White Paper specifically referred to a gap in provision, implying that there is a need for a new kind of course of higher education. It seems to me that although such demands may actually exist, they can also be created by constraints in some other part of the system. The cut-back in the number of training places for teachers is an example of the creation of a gap in that some students who would have taken a teacher training course might in future require some other kind of course.

entry qualifications

The transbinary group's guide lines recommended that

> "entry to a diploma programme should be the same as entry to existing degree programmes, with flexibility to include appropriate attainment in art, drama, etc. and to provide for the acceptance of suitably experienced mature students."

In practice it appears that perhaps a wider entry might become accepted for Dip.HE than for degree programmes. If we take, as an example, the first intake to the NELP programme of 72 students, 30 have two 'A' levels or the equivalent, 32 are mature students (21 or over) without two 'A' levels or the equivalent, and 10 are under 21 and without two 'A' levels or the equivalent. The 42 students who are not formally qualified have a variety of backgrounds. They include bank officials, a TV engineer, an oil rig worker, usherettes, metal workers, library assistants, and a handicraft teachers.

NELP has made an effort to recruit students from their own geographical area for the Dip.HE course and ten students come from the three local boroughs,

a larger proportion than for other courses in the college. There are 19 students from other Greater London Education Authorities and the rest come from a variety of areas. The emphasis on recruiting locally was part of the attempt to meet a demand which would not otherwise be met and in this respect NELP has so far been successful.

innovation

The design of the course itself is obviously a factor which influences its attractiveness to candidates. One of the dilemmas in the design of the Dip.HE course is the extent to which it should be innovatory or alternatively rely on the attractiveness of a shortened version of the established three year degree course pattern. The latter approach makes it easier for the Dip.HE to lead on to continuation courses, yet many people feel, like NELP, that the Dip.HE should make its own distinctive contribution to higher education.

end product

Linked with the dilemma of whether a Dip.HE should be something essentially new or a course which takes its style from existing degree courses is the question of the prospects for students on completion of the course. How many students will be satisfied to possess a Dip.HE by itself, and how many will wish to proceed with continuation courses? It is interesting to note that the trans-binary guide lines seem to put more emphasis on continuation courses than the White Paper originally did. Paragraph 112 of the White Paper commenting on acceptability states

> "The qualification offered after two years must be made generally acceptable as a terminal qualification and in particular as a qualification needed for entry to appropriate forms of employment..."

while in the guide lines the statement is simply

> "Each Diploma should be an acceptable qualification in its own right".

At Wolverhampton we have felt it important to attempt to establish the Dip.HE as a qualification in its own right and we gave much thought to employment prospects for diplomates. However, it must be admitted that we based our ideas on the collective experience of staff rather than a systematic study of employment needs and only after the programme had been substantially proposed was a more systematic consultation undertaken with employers. From our conversations with the NELP group their approach was similar.

relationship to other programmes - HND

No reference was made in the James Report to the relationship of the Dip.HE and the HND. The White Paper referred to the need for an awareness of the HND in planning Dip.HE courses. The CNAA in its letter to colleges in December 1973 announcing that it would be validating Dip.HE proposals said

> "The relation between Dip.HE courses and courses leading to such qualifications as HND is important. The Council is discussing this question with the appropriate bodies as a matter of urgency."

The situation had developed since then with the possibility of mandatory grants being made available for HND courses, which puts the relationship of Dip.HE and HND in a different context.

post-Dip.HE programmes

Much concern has been shown about the relationship of Dip.HE to post Dip.HE programmes. The guide lines statement on the objectives of Dip.HE concentrated on this to the exclusion of comments on the objectives of the Dip.HE itself. It said there should be

> "clear opportunities to proceed to one or more honours degree programmes or to programmes leading to professional qualification"

Elsewhere it states,

> "the Diploma should normally be designed to facilitate transfer to a degree programme with two years credit".

It seems to me that the guide lines are particularly interesting in what they leave unsaid. Clearly statements of this kind are potentially constraining to colleges which wish to make their Dip.HE programmes innovative. In my view they also introduce another dilemma: the extent to which institutions need to collaborate in providing post-Dip.HE programmes or, if they do not collaborate, the extent to which they should be made to do so.

ACID

At Wolverhampton our concern for the output of Dip.HE programmes led us to bring together representatives of the nine colleges hoping to start Dip.HE programmes in 1974 to discuss this and other common problems. As a result of this meeting an informal group called 'ACID' (Association of Colleges Implementing Diplomas of Higher Education) was formed. The group has been able to identify common problems and draw them to the attention of the CNAA and through it to DES. For example, the relationship between numbers entering Dip.HE courses and the number of teacher training places. ACID has continued to meet informally and appears to provide a useful means of communication between colleges and between colleges and the CNAA and DES.

innovation and co-ordination

I do not want to attempt to round off this talk with any conclusions. My own view about the future demand for higher education is, essentially, that it is unpredictable. Therefore all planning must be carried out in recognition of this fact. In particular, we cannot know what the demand for the Dip.HE will be, although we can acknowledge that it can be stimulated by policy changes which are not our immediate concern.

The two questions which I think we ought to keep before us during the conference are:

(a) To what extent should our Dip.HE programmes be innovative - to what extent should they break new ground and be regarded as a vehicle for changing higher education structures in a substantial way?

(b) To what extent should Dip.HEs be co-ordinated with each other - how formal an administrative structure will be needed in order for continuation courses to take place at institutions other than the one which awarded the Diploma?"

Discussion Arising

ACID — First, Mr. Sandbach was asked about the membership of ACID. He explained that it consisted of the original seven polytechnics and two colleges of education who had put their Dip.HE proposals to the CNAA. These nine had decided that membership should be open to those colleges whose Dip.HE proposals had been approved by the RAC, and universities who were validating courses, although none of the latter had joined as yet.

joint schemes — Had any joint Dip.HE schemes been proposed, e.g. between polytechnics and colleges of education? Mr. Sandbach affirmed this - the scheme at Wolverhampton Polytechnic was in collaboration with the Wolverhampton College for Technical Teachers and another college of education which was essentially for the training of primary school staff. However, there were difficulties in planning joint schemes when it was uncertain whether or not amalgamation with such colleges would actually take place.

degrees — Was there not a temptation for polytechnics already offering CNAA degree courses to devise Dip.HE programmes which were simply part of degree programmes rather than completely new courses? This, after all, would make it easier for students to proceed with follow-on courses. Mr. Sandbach replied that in his own polytechnic and at NELP a deliberate attempt had been made to design a course which meant something in itself, and no attention had been paid to what was already offered in the first two years of degree courses in order that these modules might be used for Diploma students. A member commented that while such an approach might make it more difficult to proceed to existing degree courses without loss of time, there was no reason why new degree structures could not be designed specifically to follow Dip.HEs.

staff development — A member commented that in FE there was a great need for teacher training and colleges of education involved in Dip.HE work with FE colleges could collaborate further by providing training in pedagogy for FE staff. Mr. Sandbach agreed that there was a need for more training than the four colleges of education (technical) could provide. Another participant, however, expressed his doubt that college of education staff, who were used to training students to teach in primary or secondary schools, would be equipped to teach others how to operate in an FE college.

Dr. M R Lane,
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Academic Awards

VALIDATING THE DIP HE

CNAA Involvement With The Dip HE

"The James Report included the suggestion that the two year first cycle for teacher education should lead to a Diploma of Higher Education and a further year of professional practice and study to a B.A. (Education). Validation of these awards would have been either by universities, or by CNAA or by a hybrid body. In the event, the 1972 White Paper suggested that the Dip. HE and B.Ed be validated by universities or by CNAA. Following a joint initiative by CNAA and UGC, working parties representative of universities, CNAA and the colleges, and the colleges of education produced successively joint guide-lines on the Dip.HE and on the B.Ed. These guide-lines were adopted by CNAA as the basis for validating Dip.HE's in colleges outside the university sector, and fill out the points made in the White Paper. This brings us to the end of 1973.

In 1974 the DES allowed nine Dip.HE schemes to go forward for validation, and in the event six of these were presented for consideration. These were discussed in the very short time available, between March and June 1974. CNAA set up a small validating group, able to validate on its own broad proposals like that from North East London and instructed to act together with other subject Boards of the Council where necessary. The idea was to attempt to achieve consistency of criteria in the first set of courses to be approved. In the event, of the six proposals actually presented, two have been approved, two are being revised by the colleges concerned, and on two more consideration has not yet been completed. In the circumstances, the progress has been significant, but the problems are still not solved. In any case, as far as timing is concerned, some of the current round of proposals are to include a Dip.HE wholly within an existing degree course, without necessarily offering an additional or special entry of students. In such situations, there is no reason why CNAA should not, if it approves such a scheme, approve it retrospectively, so that it may apply to students already enrolled on a degree course.

The programme for 1974/75 is not certain, but is likely to be substantial. As a matter of information, I find no sign that any university has yet launched a Dip.HE course, although one or two have made encouraging noises to colleges of education that they hope to merge or federate with.

Problems of Validation of the Dip.HE

Problems of validating Dip.HE courses are greater in several ways than those of degree courses. The Dip.HE is supposed to fulfil certain criteria not demanded of degree courses. These are the requirement that it should be a qualification suitable for someone entering employment and at the same time the foundation for proceeding to a degree or an equivalent qualification, preferably in one further year. Colleges are expected to satisfy CNAA on both these points, although to some extent it may be unrealistic to demand too much on those almost contradictory requirements.

By way of a further gloss on what has already been written in the national guide-lines, the Council's Dip.HE Group made the following additional brief observations, after discussing the first few applications in March 1974.

(1) A Dip.HE course should provide a balanced and complete educational experience, suited to the needs of those who will enter employment, as well as those who will continue in higher education.

It cannot be assumed that any existing degree course, even though organised on a modular basis lends itself without modification to the award of a Dip.HE after two years of study.

(2) A Dip.HE course should lead to opportunities for more than one type of post-diploma course, so as to provide students with the possibility of change of direction. This may mean that the Dip.HE course itself should offer elements of choice.

(3) Colleges offering Dip.HE courses should make the possibilities of post-diploma courses quite clear to intending students, and provide counselling at appropriate stages.

The Group is currently considering more closely what sort of criteria should be applied to Dip.HE's which are wholly internal to an existing degree course. That is to say, where it is proposed that a Dip.HE should be awarded after two years of full-time study on an existing degree course, with no change to the pattern of study involved. The thinking is along these lines: first, the national guide-lines already require "coherence" of the two year programmes. While this may rule out some degree courses as constructed, many would fulfil it more or less. But additionally, the two year programme must be suitable as a "terminal qualification", that is, for someone leaving to enter employment; at least, it should be as suitable as typical degree courses are. Since degree courses vary greatly in their objectives and relation to employment, this is a difficult one to judge. Perhaps subject for subject it should be as relevant to employment as a degree. A further and more difficult point arises. If the Dip.HE is to be a genuine addition to the opportunities available in higher education, then it should perhaps mean that the offering of Dip.HE at the two year point in a degree course indicates a point of change of direction for the student. If a Dip.HE is offered, in say, chemistry, after two years in a

degree course in chemistry, what does that equip a student to do, other than go on and finish the third year of his chemistry degree? Ideally, the first two years that constitute the Dip.HE should perhaps be broad enough in their teaching approach to show the student some glimmer of other possibilities. Perhaps there should be a crossing point - even if it does include "loss of time" - into say, business, or accountancy. In any case, there ought to be no difficulty about going into broadly relevant employment.

In all this, the Council's thinking is still at an early stage, and is formed, quite rightly, by a mixture of the consideration of general principles and a consideration of specific cases. It may be that further detailed guidance will be offered to colleges by the Council. In any case, some definitive statement will be needed for the next revision of the Council's regulations for the award of first degrees.

Future Development

It is extremely difficult to see what will happen with a new qualification of this kind. The situation is complicated by the concurrent reorganisation of colleges of education and the holding down of any expansion of resources. In the end, we must face that we have been presented - by government decree almost (did Parliament ever debate whether there should be a Dip.HE?) - with a two year shaped blank which can be filled by ingenuity. How people will eventually fill it I think is still an open question; clearly, experiments are being made, and experiments are, to me, better than speculation.

Certain possibilities may emerge:

(1) New types of two year programme, meeting new needs

Apart from experiments like that at North East London Polytechnic, for full-time courses breaking away from traditional disciplines of study, there are a few signs that for some careers, professions or types of employment, entry at age 20 is looked for rather than age 18. Even if not formally demanded, a good relevant two year education may be a valuable adjunct to this. In time, this might in some cases become a required pattern in a particular profession.

In other cases, some two year courses exist on an ad hoc basis and might become nationally recognised as Dip.HE's.

(2) The award of a Dip.HE in the spreading reorganisation of degree courses on a modular basis

This pattern is already beginning; but it is bound to be a feature of all modular reorganisation of degree programmes (especially those on a college-wide framework, offering wide choice) that after two years, a Dip.HE should be awarded.

This would also be true of systems in colleges of education, where a Dip.HE will typically emerge from a B.Ed framework, and provide a common foundation leading to either B.Ed. or B.A. or B.Sc.

(3) The award of Dip.HE after two years of (almost any) degree course

The existence of Dip.HE may, in the course of time, under student pressure, bring about a demand that the Dip.HE be awarded to all students who successfully complete two years of any degree. While it could be agreed that this would devalue the status of the Dip.HE if it became identified with a failed degree, my own view is that the final year failure (in CNAA at least) is a very small category, so that most diplomates would be people who specifically opted for that qualification. It must be expected, however, that most diplomates in any case may look for further qualifications, professional or degree. Perhaps few of them will want to retain, for day to day purposes, reference to their Dip.HE any more than most people would make reference to their A-levels.

Perhaps this whole question focuses on the real problem raised by Dip.HE. Is it a new opportunity for educational betterment in the community or not? I suspect that the real hurdle for most of the community is into any full-time higher education. Most of the population rules itself out, in our school system, on the way up, so that few have the necessary A-level qualifications to start with. The experiment at North East London Polytechnic is of great interest here.

(4) Part-time Dip.HE courses

There are a few signs that more part-time first degree courses may be offered in some subject areas. CNAA has just taken the step of allowing the possibility of part-time degree courses for 18 year old school leavers, as distinct from courses for mature students. Since a part-time degree course may be as long as five years, some intermediate certificate is vital. In some subjects this might be the HNC or a new TEC equivalent. In others, it might best be the Dip.HE awarded, say, after three years or so of part-time study. This would give something to the student who did not survive the whole long distance of the degree course and supply an added incentive, as well as assisting in transferability from course to course."

Discussion Arising

use of degree units

Dr. Lane was first asked about the procedure for validating a Dip.HE which used the course units of an existing degree course. He replied that the CNAA would require a statement setting out the justification for such a Dip.HE course, with respect to coherence and so on.

professional qualifications

Would the Certificate for Qualification in Social Work have any link with the Dip.HE? At present students taking this course were end-stopped as no credit was given for having taken this course if a student wanted to proceed with further study.

Dr. Lane said that this issue opened up a major area of interface - the relationship between professional courses and the Dip.HE. For certain types of student it might be useful for them to do a two year Diploma before embarking on professional training. The structure of the Dip.HE might result in professional training qualifications finding a place in the national pattern of higher education. Providing this did not make them less effective in their present training function, such a development would be most welcome.

transfer from HND to Dip HE

What opportunities would exist for transfer from HND to Dip.HE courses? Dr. Lane reminded the conference that in the past the CNAA had allowed students who do well in the first year of their HND course to proceed to the second year of a degree course. This procedure provided the opportunity for people with different entry qualifications to slot into an integrated system of qualifications. In Dr. Lane's opinion, the Dip HE extended this opportunity. NELP and Berks College of Education had already taken the opportunity to stretch CNAA rules as far as possible by experimentally admitting to their Dip.HE courses students without formal entry qualifications. The Dip.HE was a useful device for doing this. However, it would be unrealistic to simply drop the general entry qualification to one 'A' level. If an HND student could go into the second year of a degree course, on the same basis he would be able to go into the second year of a Dip.HE course, providing that there was an appropriate relationship between the two courses.

approval procedure

On the question of the approval procedure for Dip.HEs which were part of a degree course, a member asked whether both CNAA groups involved, the Board validating the degree and the Board validating the Dip.HE, would have to give approval and have the right of veto. Dr. Lane replied that at this stage, this was so, it would be impossible to operate this type of Diploma without such a consensus.

sharing units with professional courses

Would Dip.HE courses be able to share common units with existing vocational courses, such as the HND, as well as degree courses? Dr. Lane replied that unless a strong case could be made for it the CNAA would disapprove of such an arrangement. HND courses had different objectives from degree courses - they were more integrated and narrowly defined. Moreover, in theory HND students were less able than degree course students. The CNAA had always been sceptical about accepting units for a Dip.HE course which are part of other courses with definite narrow objectives. For example, it would not normally be acceptable to take a unit from a business studies course and a unit from a chemistry course and amalgamate them in what was supposed to be a broad course for the uncommited student.

B.Ed and BA

A member pointed out the problem of deciding on content for a Dip.HE which would lead either to a BA or B.Ed three year course. It was thought undesirable

to have a vocational content in the first two years of a B.A. programme, but B.Ed courses did not want the professional element to be only in the third year but to be concurrent with other learning during the three years.

Dr. Lane said that in submissions the CNAA had received so far colleges had suggested some vocational content in the Dip.HE or loss of time for students going on to the B.Ed. The CNAA hoped to see some compromise between the two possibilities and a wide range of solutions offered in different colleges. A member put in a plea that the CNAA should give a clear indication of whether it would approve B.Ed. courses which had no professional training in the first two years. Dr. Lane replied that the CNAA might eventually agree to this, but it would be wrong at this early stage to take a stand on such an issue of principle. It would be better to begin with more conventional course structures and perhaps divert from these later.

N T Hardyman,
Department of
Education and
Science.

THE DIP.HE AND THE FUTURE

"I would like to begin my talk by saying something about the prospects for higher education in general, as we now see it in the DES. I realise that most conference members, if not all, will have read reports of statements by Ministers and some will no doubt have seen copies of letters which the Department has sent local education authorities over the last year or so concerning their Circular 7/73 proposals. Nevertheless I make only a half apology for repeating what is known already because of the strong tendency people have to forget what is disagreeable and to hope that, if forgotten, it will disappear. This may sound condescending, but in saying it I am saying it to myself and to later readers of the printed record of this conference as much as to you who are taking part in it.

prospect for HE

The prospect, then, for higher education is:

(a) The demand for full time higher education places for students in Great Britain by 1981, forecast in the White Paper as 750,000 looks now as if it will be considerably below 700,000. Although no one can say with certainty what the actual figure will be, 1981 still being a long way off, numbers now being talked about are around 650,000. This is a large reduction to have occurred in our forecasts within a very short time.

(b) There is greater uncertainty than hitherto about the kinds of courses which future students are likely to want to take. At the DES we think (and there is some evidence for this) that the principal growth will be in subjects with a vocational element such as law, accountancy and economics - but we may be mistaken.

(c) The prospects for teacher education have changed enormously within a very short time. Whereas in the 1972 White Paper the estimated requirement for 1981 was 80,000 places, we are now thinking in terms of 70,000 or below. This will be a large reduction from the present figure of 115,000 and entails some painful adjustments for the colleges of education.

(d) The economic crisis has played havoc with building programmes and the cost limit systems which we have been using successfully since 1949. It is clear that for some years to come building programmes will have to be severely limited.

(e) There is a possibility that by the 1980s the declining birth rate will not be matched by a growth in the number of students achieving two 'A' levels and the proportion of these seeking higher education. The DES is now beginning to consider the implications for higher education in the 1980s, including the possibility that there will be a stand-still or perhaps even a contraction in higher education provision for as long as ten years.

The first four of these gloomy factors have come upon us rapidly and are of great significance for the reorganisation which we are now in the process of carrying out. Their effect is:

(a) That our hopes of filling places in colleges of education which are no longer required for teacher training have become more doubtful at the same time as the number of such places is turning out to be greater than expected;

(b) That we have learnt how difficult it is to make confident assertions about the future - although the White Paper itself was not particular confident - and how necessary it is to have institutional structures capable of fairly quick and easy adaptation to changing needs and requirements. This explains our increased emphasis on mergers of colleges of education with colleges of FE, for which a good case could have been made anyhow on educational grounds.

(c) A final consequence is that opportunities will now be restricted for achieving various desirable aims mentioned in the White Paper and elsewhere - for example progress towards a better regional distribution of higher education and teacher training; the reduction in the number of institutions having to work on more than one site and so on.

Dip.HE: history

To turn now from looking at general prospects for higher education to the Dip.HE itself, let me first give a brief historical resume:

(a) The Dip.HE was first proposed by the James Committee and even then was envisaged as being not only for student teachers but for other students as well.

(b) The introduction of the Dip.HE was announced in a White Paper prepared by a Conservative Government after much consultation.

(c) The concept of the Dip.HE and the reorganisation of higher education generally has been supported by the subsequent Labour Government.

(d) The CNAA and the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals quickly took up the concept of the Dip.HE and gave it greater depth and precision.

Nevertheless, the Dip.HE has been received with something less than total enthusiasm, some puzzlement - perhaps because it tries to do too much - and with some suspicion. There have been two main criticisms of the Dip.HE: that it is higher education on the cheap, and that it is not wanted.

Presumably people who criticise the Diploma for being higher education on the cheap mean that students will give up higher education altogether after two years and therefore will cost less than if they took a course lasting three years or more. Or perhaps they mean that facilities provided for Dip.HE students will be less expensive than those for degree students. I am afraid I have to speculate because I am not sure that the critics have ever really explained what they mean. I think it is necessary to ask those who are suspicious whether the White Paper supports their suspicions. Where, for example, does the White Paper say that students will be forced to take the Dip.HE and prevented from taking other courses? Does the White Paper give the impression that, if the Dip.HE attracts an entirely new clientele into higher education, some limitation will have to be imposed on numbers? What about the statement in the White Paper that Dip.HE courses should earn credit towards degrees and other study? Where is there a warning of the danger that some Dip.HE students going on to further study may take four years to achieve a degree instead of three? What about the statement in the White Paper that "Dip.HE courses must offer a genuine and useful addition to those forms of higher education already available, not a cheap substitute for any of them"? Is it suggested that the Government which produced the White Paper did not mean what it said? And, to turn the criticism that the Dip.HE is higher education on the cheap against the critics, if money is saved because students take only two years over a course which institutions and validating bodies regard as of high intellectual standard, is that, in present circumstances, necessarily a bad thing? May it not mean that more money is available for other higher education purposes?

I turn now to the second main criticism of the Dip.HE - that it is not wanted. I have the impression that it is regarded as a sort of educational Popenjoy. Let me explain what I mean. In Trollope's novel Lord Popenjoy was born in rather strange circumstances. His birth was regarded by the Brotherton family, to which he belonged, as a deliberate attempt to cheat the established heir of his succession. Attempts to prove him illegitimate failed, but fortunately he was a weakling and died before any harm was done, leaving the succession where it was before. The Dip.HE is often thought of as the Brothertons thought of Popenjoy. If, however, it dies, what hope is there for the succession? Is there a serious belief that degree courses will propser to the desired degree against the background I described earlier? Or, if degree courses are not seen as ones which will prosper, what other courses can be envisaged which will?

prospects for the Dip.HE

It is very difficult to say what the prospects for the success or failure of the Dip.HE are. It may suffer just as higher education in general is suffering, perhaps even more because it is new and untried. On the other hand, instead of suffering along with other types of course the Dip.HE may actually gain from the new situation for a number of reasons:

(a) It is novel. It is clear that the established courses are failing to attract students, but something new may appeal to them.

(b) Many Dip.HE courses will have a modular structure and this will give students an opportunity to cross the barriers between disciplines. It is significant that a high proportion of students taking 'A' levels at the moment select subjects which straddle the dividing line between arts and sciences. The figure at present stands at 20%. The opportunity to take an inter-disciplinary course must be particularly valuable at a time when the future seems so uncertain.

(c) Students are likely to be attracted by the flexibility of the Dip.HE - the opportunity to remain uncommitted for two years, to use the Diploma as a terminal qualification or a step on the way to further study either immediately or at a later stage. Similarly its flexibility should appeal to institutions, for it allows them to increase their range of offerings to students and gives them an opportunity to introduce new areas of work in a modest way as a foundation for more substantial provision later on. This is an appealing economic argument, it is, in a sense, higher education on the cheap, but highly justifiable in present circumstances.

(d) The Dip.HE will probably appeal to prospective teachers who because of the diminished requirement for trained teachers turn to other forms of higher education. This will particularly affect women.

(e) The Dip.HE gives an opportunity to older students to come into higher education for a two year course. Many of these students might find the prospect of a three year course rather daunting.

Perhaps I may seem over-optimistic, but such straws as there are appear encouraging. For example, I was encouraged, when I spoke about the Diploma in September at a conference organised by the Regional Advisory Council for Further Education in the East Midlands, that the strongest support for the Dip.HE came from a headmaster of a comprehensive school. He was not giving his personal point of view alone but was speaking on behalf of his colleagues in one of the larger cities in the country. It is from such people that support and encouragement of the Diploma really counts, for if the schools and school leavers do not support it, there is no hope for it at all. The other encouraging developments are the two courses which have already begun at Berkshire College of Education and the North East London Polytechnic. We have to remember that both institutions were recruiting under the worst possible circumstances, having received approval at a very late stage. Nevertheless, they both managed to fill their courses - an achievement which is better than one could reasonably have expected.

It is also encouraging that many colleges of education and polytechnics are contemplating the introduction of Dip.HE courses. I believe it is in such institutions that the first developments will occur. For some time there are likely to be comparatively few developments of fully fledged Dip.HE courses in institutions not already offering advanced courses on a fairly substantial scale. This does not, of course, rule out the possibility that in some cases FE colleges may contribute a module or two in, say, business studies, to a

Dip.HE course provided in a former college of education or some other establishment. In some cases I would imagine that institutions would offer the Dip.HE only and have to have arrangements for students who wished to proceed with further study to go elsewhere to complete degrees. Universities have shown less enthusiasm for the Dip.HE than the non-university sector. They may not take this line for very much longer. If they find the Dip.HE flourishes elsewhere and they cannot fill their places with degree students I would expect them to think seriously about taking it on.

I now briefly refer to a variety of other topics, which crop up in discussions about the Dip.HE and which in some cases may need further consideration within the DES and elsewhere.

grants

The White Paper promised that there would be mandatory grants for Dip.HE students. A Bill to this effect was being prepared before the October election and will be reappearing as soon as is practicable. The Bill concerned mandatory grants for HND students as well as Dip.HE students. Still under consideration are the arrangements to be made for grants to Dip.HE holders proceeding to degrees and other courses of further study. At the moment award regulations prevent a second mandatory award and changes will have to be made in the regulations to provide for the new circumstances.

degree opportunities

The arrangements for students to go on to further courses have to be worked out in detail. Circular 6/74 requests that institutions proposing Dip.HE courses show what opportunities exist for further study up to degree level. Initially it will no doubt be necessary to make specific links between a Dip.HE and one or two further courses but one would hope that in time the Dip.HE will give access to many courses in many types of institution.

binary line

Perhaps the modular structure of many Dip.HE courses and their consequent transferability will affect university courses and to some extent erode the so-called binary line. This, perhaps, rather than the length of the course, may well be the principal effect of the Dip.HE on the higher education scene. It may be fair to describe the Dip.HE as an agent for change.

non-degree courses

Undoubtedly the Dip.HE will have an effect on courses other than those at degree level. At the DES we have thought about its implications for the HND and other existing courses and for any new courses which may be instituted by TEC and BEC. Our preliminary assessment is that the Dip.HE is likely to have little impact on HND courses except, possibly, those in business studies where there could be a certain amount of overlap and competition. Even this will probably be mitigated by the proposal that HND students should be eligible for mandatory awards, so students will not choose to do a Dip.HE in preference to an HND simply for financial reasons.

part time and sandwich Dip.HEs

Little mention has been made about part time and sandwich Dip.HE courses and I can recollect no proposal for such a course in the plans that have been submitted to the DES. There is no reason, however, why such courses should not develop if the demand for them exists and if satisfactory arrangements can be made for placement and so on.

mature students

The Dip.HE is likely to bring into higher education institutions a large number of people starting higher education for the first time at a greater age than is usual at present. It will also attract back into the higher education system people who have taken a Dip.HE, been in employment for a while and wish to return to take a degree course. It may be that institutions will need to provide some sort of refresher course, or introductory course for such people in addition to the courses they are planning to take ultimately.

guidance

It is essential that students entering modular Dip.HE courses should receive adequate guidance on their choice of subject. Otherwise there is a real danger of incoherent courses which will not be satisfying.

Sex Discrimination Bill

In planning their courses institutions will need to think seriously about the effect on society generally of the Sex Discrimination Bill and about the demands that will as a result be made on institutions for education and training of women who will be getting opportunities which they have not had in the past.

employers

The attitude of employers to the Dip.HE is something which is of great concern to us all. We find it difficult to assess their view. The first reaction we got from the CBI after the White Paper was published was not very encouraging. We spoke to employers ourselves, meeting people who were responsible for the recruitment of geaduates to their firms and found their reaction less discouraging. Moreover, there has been a good deal of interest shown by commerce and industry in Reading in the course at Berks College of Education. Some people might criticise the DES for not having conducted a survey in depth into employers' reactions to the course, but I am not personally convinced that such a survey would have given reliable results. Apart from the fact that the Dip.HE is still very much an unknown quantity, employers must be influenced by the economic situation at the time they express their views. Moreoever employers take a long time to form a view of a new qualification.

professions

The attitude of the professions is also important to the success of the Dip.HE. Much of what I have said about employers in general applies to the professional bodies as well. Their first reactions were disappointing, but we found in later discussions with a number of groups that they were very willing to consider the qualification on its merits, though, as one might expect, they could not say precisely how it would fit in with their arrangements because they did not know what sorts of course would be provided and what sorts of student would take them. Recently there has been a report from the accountants which suggested that there was certainly a place for the Dip.HE in their sphere, though I should admit that when this report was discussed there was less than unanimity about it.

publicity

The means by which the Dip.HE is publicised needs consideration . NELP's broadsheet did not get universal approval but it did at least attract attention to their Dip. HE course. The question which has exercised us at the DES is whether more publicity by the Government would be helpful. There have been references to the Diploma in Ministerial speeches but it must be admitted

that recently we have been rather quiet. Is there anything that we can do now to help the Dip.HE along? My own feeling is that at this stage publicity by the Government may not be needed because institutions are capable of providing their own.

state of play

I want now to refer to the present state of play in the reorganisation of higher education. Of the 163 colleges of education and polytechnic departments of education the future of 41 has been settled, the future of 76 is close to settlement and the future of 46 is still uncertain, although arrangements for many of these should become clearer shortly. Many of those in the first two categories and perhaps some in the third will be offering Dip.HE courses starting in September, 1975.

Finally, I should mention a development in which the DES is taking an interest - that is the formation of the Association of Colleges Implementing the Diploma (ACID). The Association is holding a conference in January 1975 which some of us in the DES are looking forward to attending. This will give an opportunity for the problems connected with the Dip.HE, including some of those I have hurried over in this paper to be discussed, and perhaps some solutions will be found."

Discussion Arising

statement on current situation

Since the situation in higher education had changed so radically since the White Paper of 1972, was there any likelihood of another White Paper being produced outlining current figures and indicating DES future policy? Mr. Hardyman, reminding members that it was for the Government to decide whether a new White Paper was needed, said that the fact that there had been two General Elections this year had created unusual difficulties for Ministers. He agreed that they would need in the near future to set out the current position in a speech or by some other means.

grant aid

A member voiced his enthusiasm for the Dip.HE concept, but added that for such a course to succeed in attracting students it must be possible for students to get a mandatory grant for subsequent courses, whether they were of one or two years duration. Another member referred to the Bill which Mr. Hardyman had spoken of in his paper and asked whether the fact that mandatory grants were likely to be made available to HND students meant that they would also be given to Dip.HE students with less than two 'A' levels. Mr. Hardyman replied that the intention had been that the two 'A' level requirement for mandatory grants would be removed and the student who was admitted to the course would automatically receive a mandatory grant even if he did not have two 'A' levels.

publicity

The methods of publicising the Dip.HE was the next topic to be raised. Members voiced the need for more information about the Dip.HE to be circulated to schools, and thought the DES could help here through the

Inspectorate. Perhaps the DES could also try to generate enthusiasm amongst employers for the Diploma by arranging conferences for industrialists or providing funds for others, such as ACID, to do so. It was difficult to recruit students, at present, for a Dip.HE course without being able to tell them what employment opportunities would be available to them when they finished. Another member disagreed, saying that if the DES were involved in publicising the Dip.HE it would be accused of being 'education on the cheap'. He deplored the advertising of courses in the national press, which simply filled the coffers of newspapers. The best form of publicity, he suggested, would be the circulation of information to careers teachers and other teachers in the schools, who were probably, at present, university orientated.

Mr. Hardyman said that he thought there was very little information available at present to give to the schools, apart from what had already been published. He thought that although the DES might try to inform employers about the Dip.HE, a more local approach would be more successful. This had already been tried by the RAC in the East Midlands which was, he understood, considering the possibility of a second conference aimed at informing industry in the area about the Dip.HE in general and the courses which were going to be provided in the institutions there.

The comment was then made that in September 1975, when a few more institutions began to offer Dip.HE courses, a critical stage would be reached. It would be useful if the DES could make some information available then. Afterwards the need would be reduced, for the Dip.HE would then gain its own momentum.

colleges of education

The difficulties experienced by colleges of education which were being reorganised and did not know their future was raised. Such colleges could not get approval for their proposed Dip.HE courses? Mr. Hardyman explained that this constraint was put on colleges in order that students would not get stranded. If there were particular difficulties in particular areas due to courses being held up because the college's future was uncertain, the DES might be willing to give them special consideration.

output of teachers

The discussion ended with a debate about the control of teacher output. A member commented that as the output of trained teachers was controlled, difficulties would arise over the transfer of students from Dip.HE to B.Ed. courses. Colleges of education would be able to either fill their B.Ed. courses in the first year, leaving no room for students who wished to join the course after doing a Dip.HE or leave empty places in the first two years so that they would be able to accommodate post-Dip.HE students.

Mr. Hardyman agreed that there could be difficulties in the Dip.HE/B.Ed. route so long as there was the present exacting control of the number of prospective teachers. He expected that colleges offering both courses would find some way to reserve places on the B.Ed. course for students joining it later. The strict control of teacher output had always been thought necessary in order to guarantee trained teachers a teaching post. But perhaps if

attitudes changed and holders of B.Ed. degrees came to be regarded in the same way as other graduates, taking their chance on the employment market, such exacting control of output would not be so necessary.

Members were divided into syndicates to consider three projects during the conference week. These concerned the nature of Dip.HE courses in general, the implications of the introduction of the Dip.HE for the internal management system and external relationships of the college and the recruitment of students and marketing of diplomates. Syndicate work on Project A was aided by a consideration of papers brought by members which summarised their own college schemes and on Project C members were assisted in their discussion by a number of students and teachers from schools and colleges who are working for 'A' levels or the equivalent. The students came from Brunel Technical College, Bristol; Strode College, Somerset, a tertiary college; Hartcliffe School, Bristol, a large comprehensive school for 11 to 18 year olds; and Nailsea Comprehensive school which takes students from 11 to 18 years of age and has an intake of 16 to 18 year olds who have previously attended other schools in the area taking students only up to the age of 16 years. For Project B written reports were prepared by all syndicates and a plenary session was held.

PROJECT A

"To consider the nature of the Dip.HE and attempt to draw up some basic principles which should generally apply to all Dip.HE courses."

C M Turner,
Staff Tutor,
Coombe Lodge.

Introduction to the Project

"What we are asking ourselves in this project is what should be the underlying principles that we apply to all Dip.HE courses. In making such decisions educationalists are engaged in an enterprise of magnitude comparable to the introduction of the GCE courses in 1951, CSE courses in 1964 and CNAA degrees. We are concerned with no less a matter than the control of the learning of several thousand future students - making decisions on what they should learn, what they should not learn, how they should learn it, how they should be prohibited or discouraged from learning it - all matters of great potential control over students. Basil Bernstein and Michael Young have forcefully reminded us in the last three years that our decisions on new courses and curricula are as much matters of social as educational control, for we decide how we will shape young people and where we will feed them into our society.

I would suggest that the questions which we should be trying to answer in relation to the Dip.HE are:

(1) What are we counting as desirable knowledge? Are we making decisions about the relative high or low status of different subjects?

(2) Into what categories are we dividing knowledge?

(3) How much knowledge do we attempt to transmit, how do we sequence it and relate it together?

(4) What mode of presentation do we use, who should present the knowledge and in what kind of setting?

(5) To whom do we present this knowledge? Who are our students, at what stage do we accept them, and in what kind of institution do we teach them?

(6) How are students performances judged, and who judges them?

(7) What value corollories do we associate with the course and the Diploma?

Some of these questions have been answered for us by the DES and the validating bodies, but on others we are taking our own stances, and these are being determined by some fairly fundamental philosophical and political orientations.

Professor John Eggleston has suggested that there are two opposing pure stances regarding curriculum, and each of us approximates to a greater or lesser degree to one or the other. One stance he calls 'dominant' and the other 'assertive'. He distinguishes them through four orientations:

	Dominant Stance	Assertive Stance
1.	Traditional	Futuristic
	Prefers what has stood the test of time. Believes in the guardianship of culture and its transmission to the new generation.	Favourable to the new. Looks in all that is taught for relevancy to future needs.
2.	Determined	Innovatory
	Sees subjects as separate elements, with their own rational forms and logical grammar.	Sees knowledge as organisable for convenience. Stresses inter-relations, integrated courses, etc.
3.	Commitment	Contract
	Initiation of student into approved value system. Curriculum only available if values accepted.	Student concerned only to take curriculum and pass examination.
4.	Consequential	Casual
	Curriculum learning is a result or a by-product of other social factors, either genetic or cultural.	Curriculum learning is a tool for change, a determining factor in social behaviour and organisation.

In their discussions syndicates should explore the principles which underly Dip.HE submissions in some of these dimensions. At the end of the deliberations it should be possible to answer the questions, 'what are we trying to do?' and "what are we controlling?'"

PROJECT B

"To consider the implications of the introduction of the Dip.HE for the internal management system and external relationships of the college"

C M Turner,
Staff Tutor,
Coombe Lodge

Introduction to the Project

"The management implications which follow from the introduction of Dip.HE courses will vary according to the type of college concerned. The new course may be something very novel for a college of education which has worked with a narrow band of courses in the past but just another new course for a polytechnic that already runs many varied courses. Colleges being formed from amalgamations will be experiencing all sorts of strange management complexities and it will be difficult to separate management problems arising from the introduction of the Dip.HE from management problems resulting from the amalgamation.

Whatever type of institution we may be in, however, we will have new situations to face as managers. One way of categorising these is to use a systems approach - i.e. to look at the college as a place which receives inputs and transforms them into outputs by some process.

So, firstly, we can look at problems which arise out of acquiring inputs. We will consider separately in the third project the problems of obtaining students, but there are also problems associated with recruiting new staff, of obtaining resources, and of handling uncertainty in all three areas in forward-planning programmes.

Secondly, we can consider the management problems of the processing of Dip.HE students over their course. Among areas which might be considered are:

(a) The introduction of new styles of teaching.

(b) New integrations of subjects and disciplines.

(c) The reorganisation of the structure of departments to cope with these kinds of changes.

(d) New patterns of movement by students between units - students will have to be routed around the college system in a more complex manner than prior to the Dip.HE's introduction.

(e) Counselling and tutorial systems that control such movement will be required.

Thirdly, we must consider the problems of moving students out of the system at the end of the course - detailed attention will be given to this in Project C.

Fourthly, we should consider all those activities which help to maintain an organisation in good working order. Of obvious importance to us in this respect is the maintenance of high staff morale, motivation and performance. With the introduction of a new major course there must be an associated staff development and retraining programme. There may be problems of social cohesion among staff and students, either because they come from other institutions or because new types of work and different modes of study have been introduced into the college and some reorganisation of communication and information systems may be necessary. Obviously the problems are greater for a college that has been monotechnic in the past than for a polytechnic, and particularly great for colleges formed by amalgamation.

Fifthly, there are problems associated with forming new relationships with new bodies outside the organisation - the CNAA, universities, Regional Councils, new and more HMIs, schools, FE colleges, industry, commerce and so on. Monotechnic colleges had a highly complex set of such relations handled by various individuals or bodies in the college, but within limited scope: the polytechnics had a different set of relationships of much wider scope but not including one or two areas that now become crucial such as schools and universities.

Finally, then, since a system is always cyclical and developmental, one needs to examine the problems of the organisation's development in relation to the Dip.HE. One therefore needs to know the feedback, research and evaluative methods that have to be developed to encourage the development of the institution."

PROJECT C

"To consider the recruitment of students and the marking of diplomates"

T J Russell,
Staff Tutor,
Coombe Lodge

Introduction to the Project

"Project C asks us to look at a particular aspect of Project B, the student, and is therefore not really a discrete project. I am in some confusion about what the particular contributions and problems of the Dip.HE will be - what will it provide that is different from what is provided by other courses? My bemusement might derive entirely from having discussed the Dip.HE for three years in a vacuum, while no actual courses have been in operation, and without trying to plan one. However, it strikes me that if I am confused, if I am not always quite sure what new and unique course is being offered, this might also be true of potential students. This is really a problem in the sense that we have to market the Dip.HE both to students and their immediate

sponsors: teachings in schools and colleges. We have to persuade them of the advantages of this course and the unique opportunities it offers. Many of the courses will have a modular structure, and while this may be attractive to some students, it may be necessary for us to convince others that this type of structure has something valuable to offer, bearing in mind that students are often more traditional and critical than even the CNAA.

Students and some of their teachers will be visiting syndicate groups to help them to explore what marketing strategies can be used for the Dip.HE course. Perhaps the best approach would be for syndicates to question the students on how they view higher education generally, and what they expect from it in broad terms, rather than asking them about their specific knowledge of Dip.HE programmes. In this way syndicates will discover what students see as missing from the present range of courses, what for example lies between a specialist honours degree and an early commitment to professional training.

Syndicates might consider, in addition to the problem of recruitment, the related problems of student guidance once they are in the college. It is obvious that the more modular the structure that is set up the more student tutorial problems arise. We have to remember that there is more than one type of guidance problem. Firstly, there is guidance which is concerned with getting students through the various options - guidance through the networks. This is a great problem for students at the beginning of their course. It presents difficulties for course design. A possible solution is the use of short fat modules at the start of the course progressing to long thin modules in the second, third and fourth semesters as a means of minimising the guidance problems.

Secondly, there is the problem of tutorial coherence, in that options may not necessarily fit together if selected at random. Therefore there is a need for academic tutors to give advice and academic coherence, as well as subject tutorial advice which is probably easily coped with.

A third area which is easily overlooked, is that the sheer number of possible combinations of options means that it will be rare for a student to know anyone else who is following the same pattern of options as himself. This means that students are unlikely to have any feeling of identity with a peer group 'doing the same package'. The only assumption that can be made is that they are all on their own. It is interesting to note that the only modular courses of any size running in this country (those of the Open University) concentrate their student population on the over-25s. This may be a precondition for minimising the need for counselling on personal and social problems which would arise quite frequently among younger students. In their new merger situations, colleges of education may experience a weakening of their traditional systems of monitoring and assisting students, even on the single-honours degree courses. These problems will be most acute in the modular courses. This therefore raises questions about the type of student the colleges will want to recruit for their experimental modular courses, in recognition of the fact that the forms of social solidarity which exist in familiar higher education courses are no longer present. How will

colleges replace these old forms of social solidarity? How will they deal with the students on the way through the course? How will they ensure that in the long run they recruit only those students with the academic and personal characteristics to cope with the course?

Fourthly, a guidance system must be provided to help the students proceed on from the course. A feedback loop which demonstrates how Diplomates fare must be planned, for, in the early stages, despite all the market research we carry out, asking employers and local authorities to provide suitable opportunities for employment and support further professional training, we have no solid information. The feedback loop will show what course leavers go on to do and what they found useful in their course. The information gathered should be fed into the selection, counselling and guidance networks of the next group of students on the course and the publicity materials designed for recruitment purposes."

Syndicate Reports

The three projects were discussed by members in syndicate groups and a plenary session was held on Project B, in which members reported the conclusions of their syndicate groups. The areas which were discussed at some length in syndicate meetings and the plenary report-back session were as follows:

organisational structure

There was general agreement that the introduction of the Dip.HE would cause modification to the traditional departmental structure where this had not already taken place. The comparative merits of school, faculty and matrix systems were discussed, but the emerging problem in every case was the tension between the necessary strengthening of central services and control as against the preservation of the autonomy of the sub-units.

isolation of students

Much discussion centred on the possible alienation or isolation of students in the highly complex course structures of the future. All groups agreed that counselling systems would need strengthening and that adequate central professional expertise should be available. Personal contact with students was seen to come mostly through the teaching group, though such a group might change its composition frequently, and one syndicate preferred, in the first year, a highly developed system of personal tutors. The obvious point was made that careers information must be well organised and transmitted, but little emphasis was given to the function of the students union as a major supportive system for students. One syndicate strongly emphasised that the key factor in student morale was the quality of teaching received.

staff development

On staff development, most discussion centred on problems rather than solutions; in particular the blocking of staff promotion opportunities if amalgamation took place involving a college of education. If teachers saw the introduction

of innovative practices as prejudicial to their expected progress through the institution this would be a powerful constraint. The other major area of discussion was the tension between individual desires for development and institutional needs for different development which was likely to arise when colleges were rapidly changing their work and role. One syndicate made the point that staff ought to be able to move back and forth from teaching to management posts without loss of pay or prospects, and that pay structures should not always be based on the assumption that management and administration should be valued more highly than teaching.

One syndicate made the point that college of education staff could add a dimension of experimentation and innovation to teaching and educational thinking to which many staff in polytechnics and colleges of technology might respond with enthusiasm. In the plenary session one member commented that no one had questioned whether staff cohesion or high morale were either necessary or useful in the work of the colleges and some research suggested that there was a choice between making staff comfortable or useful.

communications

The obvious problems of communication in larger institutions with complex course designs were noted. If class contact time were reduced to the level common in colleges of education then this gave greater opportunity for formal and informal staff contact time. Similarly the establishment of interdisciplinary courses and teacher teams helped to break down the blockages of communication between departments and disciplines that had been a major problem for FE colleges in the past. A problem that was, however, not really explored was that if more management levels and central units were established, then the necessity of communication upwards could increase, and such communication was invariably the type that suffered most from distortion or ommission.

Professor W Taylor,
Director, University
of London Institute
of Education.

APPENDIX

COHERENCE

The following statement was prepared by Professor Taylor for discussion within the Institute of Education and University of London committees concerned with the new pattern of awards in the Colleges of Education. It is a personal assessment of the coherence issue and does not represent the policy of the Institue or the University.

"There is considerable scope for disagreement about what constitutes appropriate criteria of coherence in a degree programme. I hope that it will be agreed that a rationale is needed for putting particular courses and subjects together that goes beyond mere timetable feasibility and the existence of student demand.

Coherence has to do with the way in which the subject matter of the different elements that make up a complete programme of study can be seen by both teachers and students to 'stick together, remain united; be consistent, well knit' (Concise Oxford Dictionary).

The following are proposed as being among the criteria for coherence. It is not suggested that they are mutually exclusive.

(a) Conceptual Unity may be said to exist when two or more courses or subjects are concerned with a common range of phenomena, e.g. Sociology and Psychology both involve analysis of human behaviour, as do Sociology and History. Other examples are Geography and Geology, Physics and Chemistry, Movement Studies and Biology, etc. An important additional consideration is the extent to which a combination of subjects encourages students to become aware of similarities and contrasts between the approaches of different disciplinary traditions to related phenomena.

(b) Methodological Coherence. Certain kinds of subject matter may be included to provide an understanding of and training in particular methodologies, or to permit contrast between methodologies. This could be one of the gains from pursuing a traditional 'Arts' subject alongside one from the sciences. There are some combinations to which this criterion would be very hard to apply, e.g. Geography and sixteenth-century French literature, and in all cases it is difficult to achieve without very close and regular contact between all those involved in teaching the programme. Even when there is a real attempt to secure coherence at this level, it does not follow that it is always successful. The trans-disciplinarity of analytical tools does not necessarily facilitate the development of some kind of 'intrinsic' inter-disciplinarity.

(c) Thematic Coherence arises mainly in terms of time or space, or a combination of both, e.g. sixteenth-century French literature and modern French/modern European history, etc.

(d) Problem Orientation. The various parts of the programme are oriented towards a common problem, but without this being so self-conscious or deliberate as to require a discussion of inter-disciplinary connections, or for the problem to give its name to the programme as a whole. For example, Chemistry, Biology and Geography can all contribute to an understanding of environmental problems. Nineteenth-century European history combined with modern French literature can help the student understand the cultural and social problems of Europe today, etc.

(e) Development of Skills. There have been a few attempts to devise whole programmes on the basis of listing the objectives deemed to be relevant in terms of certain general educational aims, but few actual courses in existing institutions seem to be structured in this way, and the approach has itself been questioned. Skills are perhaps best subsumed under -

(f) Occupational Relevance. Another claim for coherence is to show that the elements of a programme all contribute to the performance of a particular occupational role. All the B.Ed. proposals are presumably based upon such a claim. "

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